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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

PROGRAM OF THE FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

OF

ABDULAZIZ ABDULHUSSEIN SACHEDINA

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THE DOCTRINE OF MAHDISM IN IMĀMĪ SHĪ'ISM

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ABSTRACT

In the history of the Shī^{c}ite sects in Islam, one finds that a belief in the future coming of an Imām, from among the descendants of the Prophet, termed the Mahdī (rightly guided one), is a salient feature. Al-Mahdī, in the general Islamic tradition, is a title reserved for a messianic restorer of the faith. In Imāmite Shī^{c}īsm, the belief in the messianic Imām (the twelfth and the last Imām) becomes not only a basic tenet of the creed, but also the foundation on which the entire spiritual edifice of the Imāmite religion rests. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the doctrinal evolution of the Mahdī idea in Imāmite Shī^{c}īsm through a study of the early Imāmite sources.

The twelfth Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-^{c}Askarī (b. 255/868-69), as the Imāmites maintain, disappeared in the year 260/873-74, and was declared to be the Hidden Imām who would reappear in the near future to restore justice and equity on earth. But as the period of his occultation became prolonged, the Hidden Imām was declared to be the promised Mahdī, who would appear before the day of Judgement as the messianic restorer of the faith; moreover, several eschatological characteristics were now attributed to his person. In order to prove that he was the only true Mahdī and the infallible guide of the Muslim community who had succeeded the

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rightful Imāms after the Prophet, Imāmite scholars in the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries developed reasoned theological arguments in addition to arguments based on the traditional sources such as the Qur'ān and the hadīth.

This study of the doctrinal evolution of the Mahdī idea follows three basic lines of inquiry:

First, an investigation of the earliest Imāmite sources discloses that, most probably, the twelfth Imām was not expected to go into the Complete Occultation in 941 A.D., to reappear at the end of Time; rather, he was to assume the role of al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād (the upholder of the holy war /against the enemies of the Family of the Prophet/), shortly after he had disappeared. The fact that these early sources emphasize his being al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād, supports the argument that in all probability this was the basic role envisaged for the Imām at that stage.

Second, an investigation of the Imāmite dogmatic sources discloses a shift in Imāmite belief concerning the twelfth Imām who by that time had been declared the Mahdī. The discovery that the Imāmites were confused as to whether the title Mahdī should be added to that of al-Qā'im, supports the thesis that it was after the prolongation of the occultation for a long (but unspecified) period that the twelfth Imām was declared to be the awaited Mahdī. The sources also show the development of the theological vindication of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām to supplement the traditionist defence of the doctrine.

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Third, there is an investigation of the later interpretation or reinterpretation of the early material by Imāmite scholars of the Ṣafavid period. When the doctrine of the twelfth Hidden Imām as the Mahdī became part of the religious aspirations of the Imāmites, some traditions concerning the birth and reappearance of the Imāmite Mahdī had to be excluded or given a new interpretation to make this material acceptable in a sophisticated theological context.

The conclusions reached by this study are that Imāmite scholars, at different periods, laboured in defence of the Imāmate and the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām. In the course of their endeavours, Imāmite beliefs became blended with legendary and mythical ideas. Nevertheless, these endeavours succeeded in ensuring the survival of the Imāmite religion despite the persecutions it suffered under various dynasties in the course of Islamic history, until it became established as the official creed of the Ṣafavid empire in the sixteenth century.

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PUBLICATIONS

Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina

"Early Shīcism" in The Light, Bilal Muslim Mission Publication (Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania), 1967.

"Modern Trends in Shīcah Preaching" in the Annual Report of the Federation of the Shīcah Jamats of East Africa (Mombasa, Kenya), 1969.

"Tanzania" (A historical sketch of the oriental influences) (in Persian), in the Majallah-yi Yaghmā (Tehran, Iran), 1970.

"Shīcism and the Persians" (in Persian), in the Faculty of Theology Publication, University of (Mashhad, Iran), 1974.

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THE DOCTRINE OF MAHDIISM IN IMĀMĪ SHĪ^{C}ĪSM

By

ABDULAZIZ ABDULHUSSEIN SACHEDINA

Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Toronto

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PREFACE

"No doubt an Imām will rise -- an Imām who will govern according to the name of God and the Blessings."

I read these lines of Di^{c}bil al-Khuzā^{c}ī for the first time in Aligarh, India and they made a deep impression on my heart. It was at that time that I began to think seriously about the belief of the Imāmites in the future coming of the Mahdī. In Mashhad, Iran I was amidst the very people who enthusiastically looked forward and prayed for the early appearance of their Imām, who would, to quote Di^{c}bil, "govern according to the name of God". Being in Iran was like being in a gold mine of the literature which this hope in the Mahdī has produced. For more than a millennium the idea of the Mahdī has provided Shī^{c}ī piety with a unique aspiration in the redemption through the reappearance of the twelfth Imām, and pious literature on this subject is vast.

Modern Western scholars have written virtually nothing on the subject of the Mahdī idea in Imāmite Shī^{c}ism, and this became a motive behind the present research. I felt it necessary to examine the literature on this subject and make my findings available for other scholars without losing sight of the rigorous demands of modern scholarship. The extent to which I have been able to achieve this purpose was due in

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large measure to the assistance I have received from my professors, and many friends and colleagues in Toronto, Mashhad, and Najaf, Iraq.

I wish to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Professor R. M. Savory who kindly read the various drafts of my work and offered many valuable suggestions and much needed encouragement in overcoming the various frustrations and problems which arose during the early period of the thesis. I also wish to thank especially Professors G. M. Wickens and M. E. Marmura for their guidance and support throughout the various phases of this thesis.

I am also indebted to Professors Sayyid Fāḍil al-Milānī, Wāᶜiẓ-zādah Khurāsānī, and G. H. Yūsufī of Mashhad and Sayyid Bāqir al-Khirsān of Najaf, who were a constant source of inspiration, and who provided useful information on Imāmite sources dealing with the subject. I would also like to acknowledge the help of various professors at the Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies in Mashhad with whom I had many useful discussions on theological problems related to this thesis, and I thank Mrs. Michisor for her patient and exacting efforts in typing the manuscript.

Finally, I am forever indebted to my wife for her patience and moral encouragement throughout my years of study in Iran and Canada.

This research was supported in large part by the University of Toronto and also by a Government of Iran cultural scholarship.

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TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Arabic and Persian terms and phrases into English in the present work follows in general the method of the Library of Congress as outlined in the Cataloguing Service Bulletin 49 (November, 1958). The only modification I have employed is that of using 'h' at the end of feminine Arabic nouns.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present inquiry attempts to study the evolution of the Mahdī idea in one of the major sub-divisions of the Shī^{c}ī Islam, namely the Imāmite (Twelver) Shī^{c}īsm, during the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. (fourth and fifth centuries A.H.). The Imāmites maintain that their twelfth Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-^{c}Askarī, who disappeared (or, as they would phrase it technically, 'went into occultation') around 256/873-4, is the promised Mahdī (rightly guided one), who will appear before the day of Judgement, to restore justice and equity on earth. The belief in the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām may well in large measure have been the outcome of the prolonged occultation of this Imām, who was, initially, supposed to reappear shortly after he had disappeared, to avenge the wrongs committed against the family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) and establish the rule of justice. But this hope in the early return of the Imām resulted in disappointment for the Imāmites, because the Imām was reported to have entered Complete Occultation and the knowledge of the time

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when he would reappear was only with God. The Imāmite leaders, at that time, who were believed to have been directly designated by the Imām himself, may have prudently combined the idea of the Imām in occultation with the traditions then in circulation, traditions attributed to the Prophet, about the future appearance of the restorer of the faith, al-Mahdī; at any rate, they proclaimed the twelfth Imām to be that promised Mahdī (al-mahdī al-mawʿūd) who would appear at the end of Time, when there would be violent upheavals, plague and many other natural catastrophes, and most importantly, when there would occur a general defection from God and His religion.

The primary sources in this type of inquiry remain those works which historians have tended to regard with particular contempt; and as the study will reveal, these are the very sources which can make an essential contribution to an understanding of the period in which the Mahdī idea became crystallized in the Imāmite dogma. The sources referred to are the pious literature which can be best described as hagiographical material, and the theological writings of the followers of this particular branch of Shīʿīsm. This literature has not been considered worthy of attention by many scholars, who undertake to interpret the Imāmite idea of the Mahdī by relying almost exclusively on non-Imāmite writings. The Imāmite writings on this subject are invaluable keys to

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an understanding of the forces which brought about the transformation of the Imāmite Imām to become the promised Mahdī, and hence they deserve profound analysis and serious discussion.

The Shīᶜite Imāms from the very early days seem to have handed down this genre of pious material, which was compiled by the Imāmite scholars during the tenth century. To the historian of religion this so-called "traditional" material is of great value, and careful examination and evaluation of it is indispensible if one is to detect the different stages in the evolution of any doctrine, including the one under consideration. After all, it is this primitive mode of pious belief which ultimately found a dogmatic basis to rest on, thus attaining the status of part of the official creed. In Shīᶜīsm, the cardinal doctrine of the Imāmate clearly shows this evolution: in the beginning it formed part of the simple, exaggerated belief expressed in pious terms of the traditions attributed to the Prophet and the Imāms, and only gradually became part of the dogmatic speculations of later scholars. Hence, in this study of the doctrine of the Mahdī in the Imāmite Shīᶜīsm, attention has been given to the study of many such traditions which later became the cornerstone of the doctrine under examination. Fortunately, the primary sources on this subject are extant in abundance, and most of the major works have been published.

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The traditional material in the present inquiry was studied from two angles: first, an attempt was made to arrive at a consistent textual analysis of some abstruse traditions; second, an attempt was made to find an interpretation or re-interpretation of some key traditions in the later sources, such as that of al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699-1700). Volume thirteen of the latter's encyclopaedic Biḥār al-Anwār deals exclusively with the history of the twelfth Imām.

The writings of the early Imāmites considered in this inquiry show the ardent attempts to present the Imāmate and the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām in occultation in a logical and valid way. But as these scholars varied in calibre and temperament, so did their methods, both in form and effectiveness. Some, like Ibn Bābūyah (d. 981), ventured to demonstrate the Imāmate and Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām by subordinating them to al-dalīl al-samᶜi, the so-called scriptural and traditional proof, proving every statement with the appropriate Qur'ānic quotations, ignoring in the process, at times, the context in which the āyah (verse) appeared, and not giving any consideration to the historical conditions under which it may have been revealed. Often these quotations were supplemented by the traditions attributed to the Prophet and the Imāms. Other Imāmite scholars,

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like al-Mufīd' (d. 1045) placed emphasis on al-dalīl al-ᶜaqlī -- rational proof (the form of demonstration favoured by the speculative theologians, the mutakallimūn), in vindicating the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām. This approach greatly undermined the reliability of al-dalīl al-samᶜī, which on many occasions had to rely on rare and spurious traditions. Nevertheless, al-samᶜ remained the original basis for the Shīᶜī mutakallimūn. Still others, like Tūsī (d. 1067), worked out a compromise, blending the two methods of al-samᶜ and al-ᶜaql, and vindicated the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām by studying the vast number of traditions and giving them the theological complexities of a dogma. As a consequence, in considering the doctrine of the Mahdī in the Imāmite Shīᶜīsm, one cannot ignore the specific contribution of the traditional and hagiographical material in the formulation of the theological dogma.

The scope of the present inquiry has been limited to the Mahdī idea in the Imāmite Shīᶜīsm only, and concentrates mainly on the dogmatic aspect of that idea. A full treatment of the origins of the Mahdī idea would outrun the limits set in this study because such an investigation would be impossible without proper examination of its constituent elements which are shared in common by all major monotheistic religious systems of the world like Judaism, Christianity

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and Islam. In fact, to gain a full conception of the Mahdī idea in Shīᶜī Islam, in particular, research has to go even beyond these systems, because of the extremely heterogeneous character of this doctrine, which evolved continuously in the different Shīᶜite sects that saw their full development in Iraq and Iran, where various religious movements (such as those of Mānī and Mazdak) seem to have exerted their influence centuries after they had disappeared from the surface.[1]

Al-Mahdī, the future restorer of Islam

Al-Mahdī literally means "the guided one". It is the passive participle of the verb hadā, meaning 'to guide'. The question of guidance (hudaⁿ)[2] in Islam, as it appears in the Qur'ān and hadīth literature, appears to be a significant one. The exegetes of the Qur'ān have discussed the different kinds of hudaⁿ, and have distinguished the 'special hudaⁿ' which is accorded to God-fearing persons (al-Muttaqūn)[3] who have been endowed with luṭf -- the grace of God. All guidance (hidāyah)[4] is from God, and it is He who guides everyone and everything in the world, whether by human intellect (al-ᶜaql) or by the natural conscience (al-wijdān al-ṭabīᶜī) to the knowledge (al-maᶜrifah) of Himself. It is this maᶜrifah which becomes the source of their existence

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and sustention, since hidāyah advances a person toward luṭf in order to achieve the purpose (al-maṭlūb)[5], which is al-maᶜrifah. But besides al-ᶜaql and al-wijdān al-ṭabīᶜī there is still another source of guidance, and this is through the hidāyah of those individuals who have been entrusted with this key function to accomplish the purpose behind creation. These individuals are termed hudāt (sing. hādⁱⁿ) in the Qur'ān, and are sent to every people to advance them toward luṭf and to help them attain the great benefits of the creation, the greatest being the knowledge of the Creator. The hādⁱⁿ himself is the recipient of a special kind of luṭf which enables him to carry out his duty of guiding others. In this way then, he himself achieves the goal first and becomes muhtadⁱⁿ (rightly guided) and then attains the status of al-hādī al-muhtadī (the rightly guided leader). It is this term, al-muhtadī, which is used in the Qur'ān[6] to designate those individuals who have been rightly guided and who have been appointed to guide others; it should be noted that al-mahdī, although having the same meaning, does not occur even once in the Qur'ān. Al-mahdī as a virtual synonym of al-hādī seems to have gained importance through its usage in ḥadīth literature where it is used of certain individuals in the past and of a messianic figure in the future, in a

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much more heightened sense than al-muhtadī. Al-Mahdī is the one 'divinely-guided', in a peculiar and individual way, to enable him to restore the purity of Islam. In al-Ṣiḥaḥ[7] a tradition is attributed to the Prophet, which says that he commanded people to follow his sunnah (tradition) and that of the caliphs who followed the right path (rāshidūn) and were divinely guided (mahdīyūn).[8]

There seems to be very little reason to believe that the Prophet himself during his lifetime encouraged an idea of a future restorer of faith al-Mahdī. Moreover, although the Qur'ān speaks so much about huda^{n} and hād^{in}, it does not advance an idea of such a messianic figure who would appear in future as the divinely guided leader and deliverer of the ummah. Although in the Jewish circles of Madīnah a messiah was being awaited, the Prophet does not seem to have claimed such an epithet for himself. Ḥassān b. Thābit is reported to have addressed the Prophet as mahdī in one of his compositions,[9] but doubtless in the non-eschatological sense. There seems to be also little reason for supposing that the Prophet contemplated the appearance of a mahdī, although numerous traditions are attributed to him regarding the future coming of a deliverer, which should probably be treated as fabrications. What seems to be more plausible is that the Mahdī idea must have come into being in very specific

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historical conditions. The suffering and desperation of those who in Islamic history were persecuted as Rawāfid (dissenters) -- those who refused to acknowledge the caliphate of the first three caliphs, Abū Bakr (632-34), ᶜUmar (634-44) and ᶜUthmān (644-55), and sympathized with the claims of ᶜAlī (655-61) and his descendants -- seem to have contributed more than any other factor to the growth of this idea of deliverance by a descendant of ᶜAlī. The hopes of Banū Hāshim, the Prophet's clan, who had supported the claims of the descendants of ᶜAlī and who had looked forward to the return of the prophetic charisma to them, were greatly frustrated when al-Hasan abdicated the caliphate in favour of Muᶜāwiya in the year 40/661. After that, the idea of a perfect leader, the divinely guided Imām, seems to have sown its first seeds which continued to take root among the followers of the descendants of ᶜAlī, until the first official Mahdī, Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah, was declared to have possessed that charisma to deliver his followers from oppression and to establish justice and equity, as early as the year 66/685.[10]

Thus it would be plausible to maintain that the outbreak of the civil wars within a generation after the Prophet's death (especially during the caliphate of ᶜUthmān and ᶜAlī) and the disturbed condition of Islam which followed, must

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have greatly contributed to the development of the idea of the expected Mahdī, al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar, whose function in the first place was to fill the world with justice and equity, by which Shīᶜites meant the abolition of the caliphate of oppressors like the Umayyads and the return to a pure Islam; and, in the second place, to achieve the conversion of the world to Islam. Among the different factions of the Shīᶜites who upheld the Imāmate of one or other descendants of ᶜAlī, disagreement on the identification of the Mahdī has been one of the chief factors separating sect from sect, and the representatives of each school have left no stone unturned to prove that theirs was the true promised Mahdī and that his leadership, as a restorer of the political and religious purity of Islam, was to be expected at the End of Time (ākhir al-zamān).

The use of the two titles of Rāshidūn and Mahdīyūn for the first four caliphs, in the ḥadīth literature, must have been a later addition in order to distinguish their period from that of the Umayyads. This type of idealization of the previous leadership, on the one hand, indicates the dissatisfaction of the people with the Umayyad rule, and on the other, it suggests that those who upheld the caliphate of the Rāshidūn were yearning for the return to this imaginary glorious past of the first caliphs; at the same

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time, those who sympathized with the claims of ᶜAlī and his descendants looked forward to the rule of a perfect leader, whom they considered as an Imām and al-Mahdī. The Umayyads could not have been considered as either rāshidūn or mahdīyūh by either of these two groups, which it seems were obliged to accept the historical reality of the Umayyad caliphate under protest. Consequently, the use of these two terms was initially confined to the four Orthodox Caliphs; later on, an exception was made to include the pious Umayyad, ᶜUmar b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz (99/717), whose reign was considered to be ideal by the first group mentioned above, the pious. Ibn Saᶜd reports that ᶜUmar II was even considered to be the Mahdī,[11] but of course, only by the group who looked backward on the Rāshidūn as ideal caliphs. The epithet Mahdī as applied to ᶜUmar II, seems to have been more than an honorific; he was regarded as being under peculiar divine guidance like the Rāshidūn and was expected to restore the purity of Islam.

In the light of the above, one may put forward the following tentative conclusion: first, that the epithet al-Mahdī, which never occurs in the Qur'ān, is first used in the ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet; and secondly, that it connotes the sense of "the divinely-guided one". Although its use was allowable in regard to the Pious Caliphs,

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including ᶜUmar II, the Umayyad, it was mainly used for ᶜAlī and his sons.[12]

In Ṭabarī's Ta'rīkh, there is an important report which, on the one hand, shows that the first generation of Muslims most probably had an acquaintance with the idea of a conqueror who would rule the world and who would be among the progeny of the Prophet; on the other hand, before definite conclusions can be drawn further research is needed on the life of ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ, the reporter of the important tradition included in the report, which is the point of stress in the whole account.

Before further discussing the report by Ṭabarī, it is relevant to point out that, in all probability, the family of the Prophet, in particular ᶜAlī and his descendants, from the very early years of Islam, was considered by many to hold a unique position. Thus, for example, they were considered to have had inherited peculiar knowledge from the Prophet. This is the point of an anecdote told by Ibn Saᶜd, wherein Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah comes to know that people believe they (Ahl al-Bayt) have some (esoteric) knowledge[13] (shay'an min al-ᶜilm) and he says, "I solemnly swear that we have not inherited anything from the Prophet of God, save the Qur'ān (bayn hādhayni'l lawḥayn)." Then he adds, "May God forgive us and this scroll at the end of my sword...."[14] Thus,

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Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, according to this remark, denied any such knowledge. Similarly, a man from Fārs is reported to have asked Muḥammad al-Bāqir, the fifth Imāmite Imām, (113/731-32) if he knew al-ghayb (the hidden knowledge), and the Imām replied, "We apprehend the knowledge (al-ᶜilm) when it is unfolded to us and we do not apprehend when it is taken away from us," and added, "It is the secret of God, the Exalted, which He confides to Gabriel, peace be on him; and Gabriel confides it to Muḥammad, peace be on him and his progeny, and Muḥammad may confide it to whomever God wishes (to be informed)."[15]

Ṭabarī's report concerning the probable future rule of al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī (d. 680-81)

The story in Ṭabarī's Ta'rīkh is told by Labṭah b. Farazdaq, who reports on the authority of his father Farazdaq, the poet, as follows:

> I was going to perform the ḥajj with my mother. I was leading her camel when we entered the precinct (al-ḥaram) during the ḥajj season. This was in the year 60 A.H. (680-81). While I was leaving Makkah, I met al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī with his swords (asyāf) and shields (tirās). I asked, "To whom does this group belong?" I was told that it belonged to al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī. I walked towards him and said, "May my parents be a sacrifice for you, O son of the Prophet! For what reason are you leaving the ḥajj so soon?" He said, "If I do not do so something evil may befall me (ukhidtu)."[16] Then he asked

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me, "Where are you from?" I replied, "From Iraq." He said, "By God, I do not wish to know more than this (about yourself)." He contented himself with this (much about me) and went on to ask me about the people there. /He (Farazdaq) said:/ I told him, "The hearts are with you but the swords are with Banū Umayyah, and destiny (qaḍā') is in the hand of God." Al-Ḥusayn said, "You are right." Then I asked him about something and he informed me about the misgivings (nuẓūr) he had and the hostilities (manāk) (of Banū Umayyah). /He (Farazdaq) reported/ /that/ he (al-Ḥusayn) was speaking with difficulty because he was suffering from pleurisy (birsām) when he was in Iraq (the last time)."

/He (Farazdaq) said:/ "Then I continued to walk and suddenly my eyes fell on a beautiful tent pitched in the ḥaram. I walked toward it and /I found/ that it belonged to ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ. /I went inside to see him./ He, then, asked me and I told him about my meeting with al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAli. Then he said, "Woe unto you. Why did not you follow him? I solemnly swear that he will rule (layamlakanna). And it is not right to raise weapons against him and his followers." I was incited to follow him and his words made an impression on my heart. But then I recalled the ancient prophets and their being killed. As a result, I refrained from joining /him/. I went to ᶜUsfān.[18] While I was still there a caravan returned from Kūfah, having brought water from there. When I heard about them I came out to follow them until I had made them hear my voice and hurried along without being able to catch them up (ᶜajiltu ᶜan ityānihim). Then I called out to them, "What news of al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī?" They told me he had been killed. I left them, cursing ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ. "/And Farazdaq added/ People in those days were expecting that (dhālika'l-amr) to happen and were waiting for it day and night. /While/ ᶜAbd Allāh used to say, "The tree, the palm

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and the young one will not grow until this matter (hādha'l-amr) is manifested. [19]

The whole report has been quoted to show the context in which the sentence 'he will rule' and the last quotation 'until this matter is manifested' occur. To comprehend the inwardness of this report, it is essential to know something about ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ, the utterer of these two sentences.

ᶜAbd Allāh had embraced Islam much before his father, the famous ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ had done.[20] He migrated to Madīnah after 7/628-29. He knew Hebrew language as well.[21] He came across some books of Ahl al-Kitāb (the people of the Book) at Yarmūk and used to read them[22] and even transmitted from them some knowledge. He seems to have studied these books with a person by the name of Sarij of al-Yarmūk, belonging to Ahl al-Kitāb, in his early days.[23] He was among the close companions of the Prophet, who used to write down the traditions he heard from him. Some of his colleagues objected to his writing down everything, because, they argued that sometimes the Prophet might have been in an angry mood and he might have uttered something which was not necessarily meant for the record. On this point he obtained special permission from him to record everything at every stage.[24] He named his collection of ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Ṣādiqah[25]

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("The Authentic Note-book" or "Collection") in which he wrote down those traditions of which, it is said, no one else had any information. According to Ṭabarī, he was considered to be one of the learned among the Quraysh, doubtless because of his knowledge of the Prophetic traditions. The contents of many of the traditions reported on his authority relate to certain future events and even about the advent of al-Mahdī. In historical contexts Ṭabarī mentions him on the occasion of the Battle of Ṣiffīn (36/656-57), when he is reported to have told his father, after the troops of Mu^{c}āwiya had killed Ammār al-Yāsir (one of the best known companions of the Prophet who had accompanied ^{c}Ali in his campaign against Mu^{c}āwiya), that he had heard the Prophet tell Ammār that he would be killed by an unjust group (al-fi^{c}at al-bāghiyah),[26] meaning that Mu^{c}āwiya's group was unjust. His tradition about the advent of the Mahdī has been reported by both the Sunnites and the Shī^{c}ites. The one reported by the Sunnites is as follows: /It is reported on the authority of ^{c}Abd Allāh b. ^{c}Amr./ He said that the Prophet, peace be on him and his progeny, said, "The Mahdī will rise in the east from among the sons of al-Ḥusayn, peace be on him. If he encounters mountains he will destroy them and make ways through them."[27] The one reported by the Imāmites runs as follows: "It is reported

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on the authority of ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ that the Prophet, peace be on him, said in a long tradition, 'Thus at that time the Mahdī will appear, who will be amongst his sons,' and he pointed with his hand at ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[28]

With this in mind, it is plausible to suppose that in Ṭabarī's report, quoted above at length, ᶜAbd Allāh may have been relating the future rule of al-Ḥusayn, contrary to the popular expectation of his martyrdom (dhālika'l-amr in the text). The idea of Mahdī, as a future conqueror, who the would set things right, seems to have been already known in Madīnah before al-Mukhtār b. Abū ᶜUbayd claimed this title, in a heightened sense of the term, for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah in 66/685-686 in Kūfah. The sentence 'it is unlawful to raise arms against him' (i.e. al-Ḥusayn), which sounds to be more or less a moral statement, brings to mind the sentence of al-Mukhtār, uttered at the time when he was informed that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah was on his way to Kūfah against his liking. Thus he said to the people of Kūfah, "In the Mahdī is a sign: when he comes to your city he will be struck with a sword by a person in the market; but it will not hurt him nor will it work on him at all."[29] Obviously, this was the way al-Mukhtār had planned to get rid of his master who had denied, apparently, the various titles claimed for him by al-Mukhtār. This utterance of

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al-Mukhtār reflects some pre-existing idea in the community generally that to raise weapons against the sons of ᶜAlī, among whom would be al-Mahdī, was considered unlawful. Be that as it may, there seems to be enough evidence to support the hypothesis that in all probability, before Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, the first official Mahdī in the enhanced sense of the term, al-Ḥusayn might have been considered to be the Mahdī. But the hope of a future restorer had, as yet, no definite form and could not have been an article of faith for the early Shīᶜites. Thus, according to Ṭabarī, Sulaymān b. Ṣurad, called al-Ḥusayn, after his death, Mahdī son of the Mahdī. It appears to be very clear that the word mahdī in this expression may have been used in a purely honorific and political sense to describe ᶜAlī and his son al-Ḥusayn and not in the messianic context in which it was used for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah.

The use of the term Mahdī in a messianic context

The use of the epithet Mahdī in a messianic context seems to have been used for the first time by al-Mukhtār in 66/685-686,[30] who upheld Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, a son of ᶜAlī by a woman other than Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet. Al-Mukhtār had used the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn as a basis for his revolution in Kūfah, which was inhabited by

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people of different races and creeds who were disgusted with Umayyad rule and found the revolt of al-Mukhtār appealing. Since this inquiry deals with doctrinal evolution of the Mahdī idea, I shall not concern myself with the details of the whole episode of this revolution which shows the extreme fluidity of religio-political parties at the time. The aftermath of the revolution, however, is more relevant to this survey.

The revolt was suppressed by the Umayyads and was actually brought to an end by Mus^{c}ab b. Zubayr (who represented his brother ^{c}Abd Allāh b. Zubayr in Iraq), who defeated and eventually killed al-Mukhtār in the year 687. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, who seems to have declined the extravagant claims made for him by al-Mukhtār,[31] died in 81/700-701 without achieving anything significant. But the aftermath of the movement was far-reaching. Many of the adherents of this movement did not accept the death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah as a reality, and instead maintained that he was in hiding and would eventually return and "fill the earth with justice and equity, as it was full of injustice and oppression."[32] These were the Kaysāniyyah.[33] Among them was the poet al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, who later turned to Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq.[34] This was the beginning of the two central beliefs in the Mahdī idea, the ghaybah (occultation) and the raj^{c}ah (return)

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of the messianic leader.

The second prominent person among the descendants of ᶜAlī for whom this epithet was used in the heightened sense of the term was Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. ᶜAlī (100-145/718-762), known as al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, "The Pure Soul". He seems to have been considered as the Mahdī at a very young age by his family.[35] His adherents asserted that he was al-Qā'im and al-Imām al-Mahdī.[36] On the death of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, they claimed that he had not died but was in ghaybah in one of the hills on the way to Makkah from Najd, namely ᶜIlmiyyah, and would return.[37] In fact, even the Jārudiyyah among the Zaydiyyah awaited the return of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah.[38]

Among the followers of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, who also was held to be the Mahdī by al-Bāqiriyyah faction of the Shīᶜites, who were opposed to the claims of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah. On the death of al-Bāqir (113/731-2), some of his adherents seceded and supported the claims of al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah. But Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, who was acknowledged as the Imām after al-Bāqir by a majority of the Shīᶜites, refused to aid al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah.[40] After the latter's death, al-Ṣādiq was supported by the rest of the Shīᶜites.

On the death of al-Ṣādiq (148/765-766), a faction of

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the Shīᶜites called al-Nawusiyyah[41] believed him to be the Mahdī; they believed that he had not died and would return to establish justice and equity.[42] Another faction of the Shīᶜites, namely, al-Mūsawiyyah maintained the Mahdiism of Mūsā al-Kāẓim, the son of al-Ṣādiq, who had died in 183/700-701, and awaited his return.[43] Al-Nawbakhtī mentions numerous factions which believed in the Mahdiism of al-Kāẓim.[44] Still another faction believed in the Mahdiism of Ismāᶜīl, another son of al-Ṣādiq and claimed his immortality,[45] and others proclaimed the son of Ismāᶜīl, Muḥammad, as the Mahdī who would not die until he had conquered the world, he being the Mahdī about whom the tiding was given by the Prophet.[46]

The adherents of different Shīᶜī Imāms, it appears, had hoped that their Imām would one day emerge as the Mahdī, in the messianic sense, to redress their grievances against the growing political turmoil of the period. This was probably the reason why after al-Ṣādiq almost all the Imāms were proclaimed to be the Mahdī and their return was awaited. Their death was interpreted as occultation, until the line reached the twelfth Imāmite Imām. The latter, who was in the line of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, became the Hidden Imām of the Imāmite Shīᶜites and was believed to have gone into occultation to return as al-Mahdī.

The epithet 'Mahdī' as applied to all these Imāms

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beginning from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, appears to have denoted a special designation, which had gradually evolved from a general honorific epithet into a proper name for a restorer of justice and equity, in the last days. The twelfth Imām was by no means the last in the series of those who were proclaimed as al-Mahdī, and the attribution of this epithet has continued up to the present epoch. But since this survey deals only with the doctrinal aspects of the Mahdī idea in Imāmite Shīᶜīsm, consideration of other, later Mahdīs is irrelevant.

The idea of the Mahdi in Islam considered in relation to similar concepts in Judaism and Christianity

The subject of the future salvation of mankind has been, to a greater or lesser extent, touched by all the major religions of the world and, in order to present even a concise summary of the concept in any one of them, a number of separate studies dealing with different periods of its formation and crystallization would be required. The present inquiry, as stated above, attempts to study the evolution of the Mahdī idea in only one of the major sub-divisions of Shīᶜī Islam, namely the Imāmites. Consequently, any comparative study of similar concepts in other religions fall beyond its scope. The main purpose of this section is to outline

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the general ideas about the hope in the redeemer, and his appearance and reappearance, as the case may be, in the two religions, Judaism and Christianity, which have much in common with Islam in regard to their eschatological tradition.

In the Qur'ān, as stated above, the word mahdī never appears. In fact, although we read much about 'guidance' (huda^{n}) and instruction (ta^{c}līm), we read little or nothing of salvation (najāt),[47] let alone saviour (munjī), a function attributed to the Mahdī, in the later use of the term, as a special designation of the future restorer in Islam. The Qur'ān nowhere teaches that the sinner must be regenerated. According to it, man is not dead in sin, so no spiritual rebirth is needed; but he must repent. This repentance (tawbah) gives hope that God forgive his sins and entitle him to will dwell in the kingdom of God. The Qur'ān, like the Old Testament, advocates redemption in the realization of the kingdom of God which will be in conformity with God's will and be regulated by His law of righteousness.[48]

Thus there is a vast difference between the Christian concept of the reappearance of the redeemer and the Islamic concept of a future restorer. Christianity received the ideas of redemption and the redeemer-messiah from Judaism, and there was much common ground in Judaism and Christianity with respect to messianic thinking, although the essential conflict between these two religions developed around

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problems relating to the delicate question of the identity of the Messiah.

The different elements of the belief in the Messiah in Judaism and Christianity have changed from period to period,[49] especially under the impact of historical events. In this brief survey, I shall deal with only those characteristics of the Jewish Messiah which have become crystallized in Biblical-Talmudic Judaism and which are most relevant to the present study; and with respect to the Christian Messiah I shall deal only with those features which are more or less shared by official Christianity -- both Catholic and Protestant, in order to present the basic difference between the Jewish and Christian conceptions and to contrast them with the Islamic idea of the Mahdī.

In the history of the people of Israel there was a brief period when they had an independent political life in their own land under David. The expected Messiah was supposed then to possess ethical perfection and to establish the life of bliss. At the height of David's power there appears to have been a belief that God had chosen David and his descendants to reign over Israel to the end of time. But when David's kingdom collapsed after the death of Solomon, a hope arose that this kingdom of David would be restored to Israel and that all the Jews of the Exile would return to it. This

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meant the renewal of David's kingdom and reestablishment of the ideal Jewish society.[50] Thus during periods of trouble and distress, when the Israelites were subjugated by alien peoples and exiled from their homeland, the political function of the Messiah was emphasized precisely because it proclaimed the comfort and hope that he would release the Jewish people from bondage. Hence, at different stages, as a result of the impact of historical events on the ideas concerning the last things and redemption, the Jewish concept of Messiah included both "spiritual and political" aspects at the same time.[51]

The concept of the Messiah in early Christianity was no mere product of theological idealism. The latter was the result of later speculations, when the early messianic hope ended in disappointment. The very early disciples of Jesus lived in the certainty of the Second Coming, when he would appear as victor and as the judge of the world. The Second Coming postulated an earthly appearance with material characteristics, as maintained by the Jewish concept of the Messiah, and with all political and earthly elements.[52] According to the theological concept of one of the ancient sects of Judaism, namely the Ebonites, Jesus united in himself the function of king, priest and prophet (this is still part of official

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Christianity) which correspond to the function of the Jewish Messianic figure. One of the main ideas which the Ebonites advanced was that Jesus was a true Prophet intended to restore the primitive religion of Moses.[53] This was the period of the early persecutions by the Roman rulers, which must have greatly influenced the shaping of a traditional doctrine of the last things. The later Christian idea of the Messiah became an entirely ethical and spiritual one, which "gathered into itself the ideas associated with Wisdom and Logos, and came to include the whole work of redemption from sin and spiritual regeneration accomplished by Jesus."[54]

The idea of the Mahdī in Islam has the dualism of the Jewish belief, that is the Mahdi is not only an ethical and spiritual, but also a political figure. One difference is that the Jewish Messiah is the king who will redeem and rule Israel at the climax of human history, and the instrument by which the kingdom of God will be established on earth. He retains, so-to-speak, his nationalistic character first and then eventually becomes universalistic; but the Mahdī is universalistic from the beginning of his career, since nationalism has no part in the restoration of the Islamic purity.

The historical development of the Mahdī idea in Islam, in particular in Shīʿite Islam, has much in common

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with the Jewish concept. It consisted of both political and religious aspirations, the political basis of the idea being spiritualized after the political disappointments occasioned by the failure of various Shī'ī revolts. In the history of Shī'ism, however, periods of trouble and distress preceded occasional periods of ease under some Shī'ite dynasties like those of the Būyids (tenth century) and later on, the Ṣafavids (sixteenth century) under whom, it appears, the 'spiritualization' of the Mahdī idea may have been crystallized in its present form. The political function of "filling the earth with justice and equity," which would have eventually resulted in the spiritual well-being of the people, was emphasized from the very early times in the development of the idea, and ethical and spiritual perfection was added to it separately and gradually.

The other characteristic of the Messiah emphasized in Judaism is that of his human origin. Thus, "We Jews all expect that the Messiah will be a man of purely human origin."[55] Even when sometimes supernatural qualities were attributed to him; the Messiah was always of human origin. He was an agent of God entrusted with the task of defeating the enemies of Israel, restoring the people to the Land, reconciling them with God, and introducing a golden age of spiritual and physical bliss. But "the Messiah was always an agent of God

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and never a saviour in the Christian meaning."[56] In Christianity the Messiah is the son of God. God, according to this doctrine, "has become man and has allowed his only begotten son to suffer sacrificial death as a propitiation for the sins of mankind."[57] It was this status of divinity of the Christian Messiah which remained a doctrine irreconcilable with the strict Jewish transcendental monotheism and one of the basic controversies between the two religions.[58] In fact, the whole Christian church has itself always had problems and divisions over the Nature and Person of the Messiah.

In Islam, where the doctrine of incarnate God is impossible, as in Judaism, the human origin of the Mahdī is obvious, although among some Shīᶜite sects of extremist tendencies the Mahdī was also declared to be divine. One such faction was a sub-sect of al-Kaysāniyyah (the followers of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah): al-Karbiyyah (the followers of Ibn Karb), who maintained that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah was God.[59] In Islam the human origin of the Mahdī is supplemented by a clause that required him to be from the progeny of the Prophet, having inherited Prophetic excellence in all matters. In Judaism and Christianity also the Messiah is from the House of David and the stem of Jesse. Like the Jewish Messiah, the Mahdī is also embellished with

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supernatural qualities besides being "full of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of Lord."[60]

There is a remarkable similarity here between the Mahdī and the Zoroastrian saviour, Saoshyant, who is the hero of the final Resurrection in Zoroastrianism.[61] The Zoroastrian doctrine of salvation is founded on faith and works, and hence a person will be individually judged and regenerated in the last days.[62] Zoroaster himself as a Saviour Saoshyant or, more literally, "He who will bring benefit"[63] came forward to guide man to choose what was right and to assure eternal salvation. But, it appears, under the impact of historical events, his followers came to look forward to the fulfilment of his prophetic missions, when this was not completed in the first millennium, in the successive millennia of three Saoshyants spiritually born of his seed,[64] the final one being entrusted with the fulfilment of the eternal salvation of the world.[65] Just as the Saoshyant is of the seed of the Iranian Prophet, the Mahdī is of that of the Islamic Prophet.[66]

The functions of the Jewish Messiah and the Mahdī do not differ greatly. Both have to establish justice and redeem the whole world from oppression, suffering and war, and introduce a period of spiritual and physical bliss. But

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whereas the Jewish Messiah is concerned first with nationalistic considerations such as defeating the enemies of Israel and restoring the people to the Land, and then as a consequence redeeming the whole world, the Mahdī, like Jesus, will first be engaged in destroying the enemy of God, al-Dajjāl, the Antichrist, who will have led the servants of God astray, and then will bring about the political subjugation of the whole world, in order to establish the kingdom of God. The Second Coming of Jesus, the Messiah, is expected to conquer Satan, to put an end to evil, whereby sin will cease and death will pass away;[67] and then the kingdom of the saints will be established who will rule together with the Messiah, since his first appearance did not suffice to eradicate evil from the world and to convert all men to belief in him.[68] The affinity of part of this expectation with the Shīᶜite conception of the future rule of the Mahdī with his close associates is evident in some very early Imāmite sources. Ibn Bābūyah reports a tradition in which al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said that the Mahdī will rule from Kūfah assisted by three hundred and thirteen of his close associates.[69]

Despite all the points of resemblance which have been summarized above, it should be made clear that the essential marks of the Islamic idea of the Mahdī are lacking in both the Jewish and the Christian Messiah.

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In the above section references were made to the Mahdī idea in Islam in general, with occasional reference to the Shīᶜite view point. It is important to remember that in Imāmite Shīᶜism the concept of the Mahdī is an essential doctrine which forms an integral part of the central dogma of the creed, the Imāmate. Thus it is relevant, at this point to consider the principle of Imāmate, as propounded by Imāmites, which has Mahdiism as its corollary. According to Ṭūsī, one must accept the validity of the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām before discussing his being the Mahdī or his ghaybah.[70]

The principle of the Imāmate and the idea of Mahdī in the Imāmite Shīᶜism

The Imāmite theologians, in their exposition of the Shīᶜite creed, divide the Principles of Religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn) into five tenets:

1. al-Tawḥīd: The affirmation of Unity of God (al-iqrār bi'l-waḥdat).
2. al-ᶜAdl: Belief in the Justice of God.
3. al-Nubuwwah: Belief in Prophecy.
4. al-Imāmah: Belief in the Imāmate.
5. al-Maᶜād: Belief in the Day of Judgement.

In four of these five principles, that is 1, 2, 3,

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and 5 the Imāmites in general share a common ground with the Sunnites although there are differences on points of detail. With respect to the second principle, al-ᶜAdl, the Imāmite position is similar to that of the Muᶜtazilites. Al-ᶜAdl means that God is infinitely removed from every evil act and from being remiss in what is declared as incumbent.[71] Al-ᶜAdl depends on the knowledge of good and evil as determined by reason (al-ᶜaql); reason guides a person to such knowledge, and that good is good in itself, and evil is evil in itself, whether the lawgiver pronounces it so or not.[72] It is for this reason that the Imāmites are sometimes known as ᶜAdliyyah, the believers in the Justice of God (as maintained by the Muᶜtazilites). As for the fourth principle, al-Imāmah, the Sunnites do not consider it as aṣl, a founding principle of religion,[73] while the Shīᶜites make it their central and cardinal principle. The foundation of the Shīᶜite creed is based on the principle of al-Imāmah.

The Shīᶜite Imām, unlike the Sunnite caliph, is regarded as designated by God. It is He alone who appoints the Imāms,[74] one by one, in accordance with the waṣiyyah[75] revealed to the Prophet, which announces the names of those who would succeed him.[76] The Imāmate is the covenant (ᶜahd) of God and His Prophet with the persons specified by their

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names in the waṣiyyah.- No Prophet is sent without a successor among his own progeny,[77] who are the true heirs to the prophetic knowledge.[78] The Imāmate possesses the status of the prophets and the inheritance of the legatees (al-awṣiyā'). It is the Khilāfat Allāh (deputyship of God) and Khilāfat al-Rasūl (vicarship of the Prophet); it is the position of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (the Amīr of the Believers).[79] Consequently, the Imāmate, like prophethood (al-Nubuwwah), has to be announced at the set time, for the guidance of mankind, by the will of God.[80] The leadership of the Imām resembles that of the Prophet himself, in its temporal and spiritual aspects, and therefore, the Imām is equal to the Prophet in all respects except that the Prophet, and ᶜAlī among the Imāms, hold a special excellence over the other Imāms in the methods of comprehending the lawful and unlawful (al-ḥalāl wa al-ḥarām) in the Faith.[81] The Imām, like the Prophet, is endowed with special knowledge and has inherited the knowledge of all the ancient prophets and their awṣiyā'.[82] In this way, the Imām is the link with the way of guidance, and without acknowledging him a person seeking guidance cannot reach guidance.[83]

The Imām, like the Prophet, is blessed with special grace from God, which renders him immune to sin (ᶜaṣama)

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before God makes him His witness (shahīd)[84] to the people and His ḥujjah[85] on them. ᶜIṣmah, as it was known to the later Imāmites, was a special mark of the Imām. Whereas the Sunnite theologians considered ᶜiṣmah to be a peculiar quality of the Prophet, the Shīᶜite theologians contended that since al-Imāmah was intended for the continuation of the mission of the Prophet, and the guidance of mankind after him, the ummah could not afford to accept a fallible successor to this divine institution and therefore, the Imām had to be protected from sin like the Prophet. The difference between the two creeds became marked when the Shīᶜite Imām was asserted to have possessed the light of God, which was passed on to him by the Prophet. It was this light (nūr) which attracted the people and made them advance toward him.[87] By becoming a partner in the Prophetic light, the Imām, as its possessor, attained all sorts of transcendental distinctions, such as "the tree of prophethood and house of mercy;....the keys of wisdom, the essence of knowledge, and the locus of apostleship, the frequenting place of angels and repositories of the secret of God."[88]

Besides the Prophetic light the Imām is heir to the Prophetic weapons (al-silāḥ)[89] which resemble the ark (al-tābūt) of the Israelites in that in whichever house the ark was

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found, prophethood was there, and in whichever house the weapons of the Prophet were found, Imāmate was there.[90] The weapons of the Prophet and his knowledge remain in the same house, hence the Imām inherits both his knowledge and the weapons which he hands over to the succeeding Imām when he dies.[91] This also means that the Imām does not die without seeing his successor[92] to whom he entrusts "the Books (al-Kutub), the knowledge (al-ᶜilm), and the weapons (al-silaḥ)."[93] Consequently, it is in his person that religion can survive. He is endowed with the power of interpreting religion at different times and "the earth cannot be set aright except by the Imām." As a result, a person who dies without acknowledging his Imām dies a death of ignorance.[94] Besides belief in the Unity of God, the Prophecy and the Day of Judgement, it is incumbent (wājib) to believe in the Imāmate of the rightful Imām, the Master of the Age (Ṣāḥib al-Zamān), who is the infallible leader and the protector of the Religion. The soul cannot be saved without the knowledge of the Imām al-Zamān. The sixth Imām, Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, was once asked, "Is it obligatory for every person to acknowledge his Imām?" He replied, "God, the Exalted and Glorious, sent the Prophet, peace be on him and his progeny, to all mankind and made him His Ḥujjah to all His creation on earth.

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Thus those who believe in God and the Prophet and follow him and confirm his prophethood, should also acknowledge the Imām among us."[95]

Since the believers cannot find a way to salvation without the Imām, God, who is just and who has created the Universe with a purpose, will not abandon the world without such a leader. It is incongruous to suppose that God would impose taklīf[96] without proper guidance as to its performance. Taklīf is imposed in order to attain great reward, which is the goal of the Creation. But it is through the Prophet and the Imāms that advancement toward reward comes about. Thus the Imām is responsible for elucidating the taklīf which comprises the religious injunctions. As a consequence, as long as taklīf remains imposed, the Imām co-exists with it to enable the mukallaf (the one on whom the taklīf is imposed) to perform the religious duties. This means that there is an Imām in every age, be he manifest (zāhir) or concealed (mastūr),[97] who has the knowledge of al-ḥalāl and al-ḥarām in Islam and who calls people to the way of God.[98] But there are times when the world can be without a manifest Imām; this is so when God is enraged at the people[99] who are unable to see the Imām although he sees them.[100]

The belief in the Imām in occultation seems to have

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been known to the other Shī^{c}ite groups before the Imāmite twelfth Imām went into occultation. It is hard to ascertain how early the belief in the Hidden Imām was held, since the first mention of such belief by a Shī^{c}ite group is attributed, by the later authorities, to the Kaysāniyyah. The Kaysāniyyah maintained such a belief in their Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, the first official Mahdī, who was considered to be in ghaybah.[101] The Imāmites, who maintained that their twelfth Imām was in occultation, developed this idea to its fullest extent and included it in their exposition on the Imāmate. Several Imāmite scholars wrote works entitled 'Books on Ghaybah'.[102] According to these authors, ghaybah is a state chosen by God for the Imām who is in danger of being slain by his enemies. Thus the twelfth Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-^{c}Askarī, went into occultation in the year 256/873-74 and will continue to live in this state for as long as God deems it necessary and then He will command him to reappear and take control of the world, in order to restore justice and equity.[103] During this period of occultation, the Imām is not completely cut off from his followers but has spokesman, in the person of learned jurists, who act on his behalf and guide the Imāmites in their religious matters.

The Mahdī who the Sunnites expect "is strictly an ultimate Khalīfa of the Prophet."[104] Ibn Khaldūn in his

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Muqaddimah has summarized the Sunnite position on the question of the future restorer of the faith in the following terms:

> It has been well known (and generally accepted) by all Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will without fail make his appearance, one who will strengthen the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdī. Following him, the Antichrist will appear, together will all the subsequent signs of the Hour (the Day of Judgement), as established in (the sound tradition of the Ṣaḥīḥ). After (the Mahdī), ʿĪsa (Jesus) will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or, Jesus will descend together with the Mahdī, and help him kill (the Antichrist), and have him as the leader in his prayers.[105]

The Sunnites do not consider belief in the Mahdī as an essential part of their creed, as the Shīʿites do. Ibn Khaldūn,[106] and in recent times Aḥmad Amīn,[107] are of the opinion that the idea of the Mahdī must have been unknown to the Prophet, simply because the two 'authentic' Ṣaḥīḥs, that of al-Bukhārī and that of al-Muslim, do not cite any tradition on al-Mahdī. The argument is not particularly convincing because it assumes that the two Ṣaḥīḥs were the only repositories of sound tradition, which, in any case, cannot be substantiated. That the idea of the Mahdī was unknown to the Prophet is hard to ascertain, more so in the light of its presumed popularity among the Muslims of the first century of the Hijra, when, as the sources report,

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al-Mukhtār claimed the title for Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah.

The views of the 19th-century Western Islamologists on the origins of the Mahdī idea in Islam in general and in Shīᶜīsm in particular

The concept of Islamic salvation, as taught by the Qur'ān, had not, in all likelihood, envisaged the appearance of the redeemer Mahdī to restore the purity of Islam in the last days. But the growth of such a hope for the first time among the Arab settlements in Kūfah, which, as the later sources show, had a large number of non-Arab converts to Islam, has given rise to discussion on the origins of the Mahdī idea in Islam. Al-Mukhtār, who had preached the Mahdiism of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah for the first time in 66/685, was joined in his revolt against Umayyad rule by a number of these non-Arab converts who had belonged to many different creeds and races.(108) It is to these various groups that the origins of the Mahdī idea, particularly in Shīᶜī Islam, has been ascribed by the 19th-century Western Islamologists, whose views will be discussed in this section.

19th-century Western Islamologists are divided in their opinion about the origins of the Mahdī idea in Islam. Ignaz Goldziher, Margoliouth and Macdonald maintained that Jewish-Christian elements have played a vital role in the development of the idea of rajᶜah -- the return of the

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Hidden Imām and the doctrine of the Saviour Imām -- the Mahdī; while Snouck Hurgronje preferred a Christian origin based on the idea of the Second Coming of Jesus and the tradition of the last days.[108] On the other hand, Darmesteter and Blochet attributed a Persian origin to the doctrine, introduced into Islam by the Persian converts, who brought with them the idea of the Zoroastrian saviour, Saoshyant, who belonged to the family of the Iranian Prophet, Zoroaster. This conception, they say, was transferred to the family of the Prophet and the personality of the Shī^{c}ī Imāms.

Ignaz Goldziher's opinion on the subject of the Saviour Imām, the Mahdī, was the main source for views held by later scholars like Margoliouth and Macdonald and others. His readings in several early Imāmite sources gave him a deeper insight into the nature of the Shī^{c}ite doctrines discussed in his Vorlesungen über den Islam.[110] On several occasions in his exposition on the Islamic sects, Goldziher remarks on the influence of Jewish-Christian elements[111] in the development of the Mahdī idea. While the influence may have been possible, the whole subject of the influences of ideas has been reconsidered in the light of modern theories of comparative religion. It could be contended that the question of influence in a subject like 'hope' in the future saviour does not arise at all, because such hope was a

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common possession of [illegible] mankind, in one way and another, at virtually all times, and that especially when political and social conditions were unfavourable to a particular group, it was but natural for it to advocate a messianic figure to deliver it from afflictions and social injustice. 'Adoption' of such an idea does not arise when one contemplates the similarity of circumstances under which this peculiar hope came into being. Margoliouth, who subscribes to Goldziher's opinion, says, "....but the outbreak of the civil wars within a generation after his /the Prophet's/ death, and the perturbed condition of Islam which followed, led to the adoption of the idea /of the Mahdī/ from Jews and Christians, who look forward respectively to the appearance and reappearance of the Messiah."[112]

That which seems plausible to maintain on the question of the origin of the Mahdī idea in Islam is that, during the later development of the idea when numerous characteristics were added to this future restorer, certain marks of such a deliverer might have passed from the Jewish and Christian Messiah to the Islamic Mahdī. But the adoption of the title 'Mahdī' for such a saviour in Islam, which seemed to be an unsolved puzzle to Margoliouth, is hardly so; because in traditional cultures where a cross-current of ideas seems to be a commonplace, the ideas were borrowed slowly and

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almost unconsciously, and were usually assimilated in the new culture in their own terminology. As mentioned above the term mahdī itself originated in some traditions attributed to the Prophet. The view that the word mahdī is the arabicized form of the existent word masīḥ, as maintained by ᶜAlī al-Wardī and supported by Muṣṭafā Kāmil al-Shaybī, has no philological basis at all.[113] Al-Wardī's argument is based on the usage of the term masīḥ in the Jewish scriptures and the similarity of the functions of Masīḥ mentioned therein and the function of the Mahdī as maintained by the Shīᶜites, namely, that the Mahdī will rise with a sword and avenge God to establish the rule of justice on earth.

On the question of the origin of the 'Mahdī idea' in Islam, al-Shaybī contends that the idea should be traced back to Judaism and Christianity and the utterance of ᶜUmar I, who has been reported to have said at the time of the Prophet's death, "Some of the hypocrites (al-munāfiqīn) have alleged that the Prophet is dead, but by God he is not dead; he has gone to his Lord as Mūsā b. ᶜImrān (Moses), returning to them after it was said that he had died. I solemnly swear that the Prophet will return as Mūsā returned and will cut off the hands and feet of men who allege that the Prophet is dead."[114] Or, as al-Shahrastānī reports: ᶜUmar said,

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"Muḥammad has ascended to heaven as did Jesus."[115] Al-Shaybī quotes Ibn Bābūyah, inappropriately, in support of his contention that Jewish and Christian influences have played an important part in the development of the Mahdī idea in Shīᶜīsm to the extent that, "For the Prophet, on whom be peace, has said, 'There will occur among these people (the like of) what has occurred among previous peoples, even as one horseshoe resembles another, or as one feather follows another.'"[116] Al-Shaybī leaves unfinished the quotation from al-Iᶜtiqādāt of Ibn Bābūyah which states the context in which the citation appears. Ibn Bābūyah was trying to prove that resurrection of the dead did take place among the people of the past, and according to the saying of the Prophet, as quoted above, "it is necessary to believe that resurrection (rajᶜa) will take place in this community as well."[117]

Although, according to al-Shaybī, ᶜUmar I was the first person to have believed in the Mahdiism of the Prophet, with a parallel in the return of Moses and the ascension of Jesus, the question remains unanswered whether he was speaking under Jewish or Christian influence, or was unconsciously referring to the Qur'ānic verses about these two prophets,[118] or was simply deeply grieved for the Prophet's death and could not accept it as a literal, objective fact.

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At one point, when Goldziher mentions the Jewish-Christian elements in the idea of the future saviour in Islam, he also mentions the common ground shared by the Mahdī and the Persian image of Saoshyant. He says, "To the Jewish-Christian elements from which the belief in Mahdī (a draws its origin some marks of the image of the Parsi Saoshyant also joined in; and the irresponsible imagination of the shrewd idle (persons) undertook to produce an opulent Mahdī mythology in course of time."[119] This passing remark about the Persian influence had been dealt with fully by two French orientalists James Darmesteter,[120] and Edgar Blochet[121] before him.

Darmesteter thinks that the idea in Islam must have originated from the Prophet himself, but that what details he must have contemplated of such a deliverer cannot be ascertained. What is evident is that the idea saw its full development in favour of the descendants of ʿAlī during the Umayyad period.[122] The full-scale conquest of Iran took place during this epoch, and the Persians, although having embraced Islam, were not prepared to allow their ancestral beliefs fall into oblivion; thus they blended their Zoroastrian beliefs with Islamic ones. One of these beliefs was in the advent of the future saviour by the name of Saoshayant, who would belong to the prophetic family of Zoroaster. This

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belief was similar to the Shī^{c}ite belief in a deliverer springing from the progeny of the Prophet. The imperfectly Islamised Persian converts had merely to change the proper names and transfer the conception to the family of the Prophet and relate the story that "one day ^{c}Alī asked the Prophet, 'O Prophet of God, is the Mahdī going to be among us or other than us?' The Prophet replied, 'Of course, he will be among us. God must terminate creation with us as He began with us.'"[123] Thus Darmesteter traces this idea in Iran ending with the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty (16th century). His main theme throughout anticipates Minorsky's well-known statement: "Shī^{c}īsm, with its overtones and its aroma of opposition, of martyrdom, and of revolt, is matched quite well with the Persian character."[124] In other words, the ^{c}Alid revolutions, in any form, appealed to the Persian national attitude as conditioned by historical circumstances, and consequently, found in them their staunchest support.

Blochet, who studied under Darmesteter, subscribes to his master's view and boldly states in the preface of his work that the Mahdiism was borrowed from Sassanid Persia.[125] He maintains that it is the Zoroastrian theory of a future messianic figure which has influenced the formation of the 'Mahdī idea' among Muslims, although its peculiar mark remains

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Islamic.[126] He refutes the view that Shīᶜīsm must have borrowed the idea in its full from Judaism, since he contends, the role played by Judaism in the formulation of Islam is far inferior to that of Christianity; and then, he adds, "There is no doubt that the Messianism of the Jewish people itself is of the Iranian origin."[127] Blochet draws parallels from pre-Islamic Sassanian texts to prove his thesis that the Mahdī is in all respects identical with the Mazdakite Bahrām the Victorious.[128]

Both Darmesteter and Blochet have relied heavily on the ancient Iranian texts and Blochet has used many Persian sources written after the Ṣafavid revolution in addition to the Sunnite Arabic works, but, unfortunately to the exclusion of almost all early Imāmite sources, some of which were used by Goldziher. After the establishment of the Ṣafavid dynasty and the victory of Shīᶜīsm over an Iran which was, at least in theory, predominantly Sunnite, it was natural for Persian authors to propound such views about the Shīᶜite religion. While it is true that the 'Mahdī idea' gained foothold in the ancient lands with a rich Iranian culture, it seems to be an exaggeration to stress Iranian influence to this extent in its dogmatic formulation. The central doctrine of the Shīᶜite creed, the Imāmate, whose corollary is Mahdiism, was formulated gradually, whereas the essential characteristics

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of the doctrine had already, it seems, existed in its crude form, with the formation of the Party of ᶜAlī (Shīᶜat ᶜAlī) in the early days of Islam, after the Prophet's death. This party of ᶜAlī considered ᶜAlī to have possessed something more than the other caliphs, even to the extent of the role of Mahdī. Ṭabarī has preserved a report which on the one hand shows that the people had some idea of the Mahdī in the early years of Islam, and on the other hand indicates that the term seems to have been confined in the beginning, at least, to ᶜAlī and his descendants.[129] Thus runs the statement of Sulaymān b. Ṣurad on the grave of al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī in Karbalā' (65/684-685):

> O God, have mercy on al-Ḥusayn, the martyr son of a martyr, the Mahdī son of the Mahdī, the truthful son of the truthful....[130]

In the final analysis, it seems most probable that the idea of the Mahdī itself was not borrowed from either Persians or Jews or Christians but was an indigeneous development in Islam, either growing out of the ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet, or justified by it, and stimulated by the social conditions. But the later characteristics added to the persons of the Mahdī, both transcendental and physical, may have been influenced by various religious groups. Thus in the Imāmite writings one often comes across traditions

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which state that the Mahdī resembles the past prophets. The sixth Imām, Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, is reported to have said,

> God has bestowed three traditions from the past prophets on our Qā'im (i.e. the Mahdī): "He caused his birth to resemble that of Moses; his occultation to be like that of Jesus; and the delay (in his appearance) to be like that of Noah; and He caused the life span of Khidr (Elias) to be a basis for his (long) life."[131]

The relationship between the Second Coming of Jesus and the appearance of the Mahdī seems to have been accepted by the Imāmites, in order to discredit a tradition that both the Masīḥ and the Mahdī were one and the same person and that it was the Masīḥ, that is Jesus, whose advent was to be looked for. This tradition was advanced by some Sunnite groups to challenge the role of Mahdī of the Shīᶜite Imām. According to the Imāmites, of all the persons who had claimed to be the Mahdi, it was only the son of al-ᶜAskarī who was the promised Mahdī and who will be assisted by the Masīḥ, Jesus, in restoring the purity of Islam. In the next chapter, the development of this Imāmite concept of the Mahdī will be traced in 4th/10th and 5th/11th Muslim sources.

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CHAPTER II

THE TWELFTH IMĀM, THE IMĀMITE MAHDĪ

In the year 260/873-4 [1] Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī, the eleventh Imāmite[2] Imām died in Sāmarrā, Iraq, the then ᶜAbbāsid seat of the caliphate. The most immediate and sensitive problem facing the Shīᶜites at that time was to determine the successor of al-ᶜAskarī. The Imām, as the Shīᶜite sources report, could not openly declare his successor since "the days were difficult /for the Imām and his followers/ and the Caliph /al-Muᶜtamid (256/869-70)/ was relentlessly searching for him (his successor) and wanted to get his hands on him by any means he could. It was also at this time that the story was being circulated that the Shīᶜites were awaiting his appearance. This was the reason why /the Imām/ did not reveal his son during his life time nor did the majority /of his followers/ know him."[3] The story that a descendant of the Prophet would rise with a sword (al-Qā'im bi'l-sayf) and wipe out injustice on earth (the ᶜAbbāsid caliphate being looked upon as a symbol of this injustice at this time) was widespread much earlier than this, and this, as the

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author of Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī hints, was the main reason of the ᶜAbbāsid endeavours to crush various ᶜAlid revolts during their caliphate.[4] In consequence, the Imām kept secret the child's birth which, as affirmed by the Imāmites, occurred in the year 255/868-69, and allowed only his trusted close associates to know of the existence of his successor.

The belief that an Imām could not die without seeing his successor[5] seems to have been well-formulated by this time, since the Shīᶜites who upheld the Imāmate of al-ᶜAskarī made this a deciding factor by basing their contentions on it, and disagreement on this issue led to the formation of various subsects of the Imāmites themselves. Al-Nawbakhtī has enumerated as many as fourteen of these fractions,[6] while al-Shahrastānī limits them to eleven.[7] Al-Masᶜūdī counts as many as twenty.[8] A careful study of these different fractions reveals the general confusion created by the death of al-ᶜAskarī over the question of the Imāmate and how some individuals took advantage of the situation by supporting one or the other view and gathering followers around themselves.

Before proceeding to investigate what the Imāmites held about the succession to al-ᶜAskarī, it is necessary to make a digression in order to get a clear idea of what these

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several other groups believed about the Imāmate after al-ᶜAskarī; this is especially relevant to our thesis.

The Question of the Imāmate after al-ᶜAskarī

Compared with other Books on Sects (al-Milal) which discuss these subdivisions of the Imāmites in 260/873-4, Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī[9] (d. at the beginning of 4th/10th century) has preserved the most detailed information on the positions taken by different groups; others have mentioned them only very briefly. He has devoted even more space to the important question of the stand taken by the Imāmites. This account of the Shīᶜites and their Imāms during this period has rendered al-Nawbakhtī's Firaq one of the primary sources for the investigation of the development of the Mahdī-idea in Imāmite Shīᶜīsm.

Al-Nawbakhtī summarizes the central doctrines of each of the fourteen fractions after the Imāmate of al-ᶜAskarī as follows:

Fraction (1)

This group believed that Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī had not died and that he was alive in occultation, and that he was al-Qā'im. They argued that an Imām could not die before seeing his offspring who would succeed him,[10] and that there was always the Ḥujjah[11] of God on earth. Since al-ᶜAskarī

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left no successor, they said, it was right to hold that he was not dead and that he had disappeared to return as al-Qā'im[12] and al-Mahdī, after his first occultation (ghaybah).[13]

It is relevant to note that similar ideas were held about the seventh Imāmite Imām, Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar (d. 183/799-800) and the group was known as al-Wāqifiyyah (i.e. those who stopped with the Imāmate of Mūsā). This name will be discussed more fully below with its antithesis the Qaṭᶜiyyah (i.e. those who maintained the continuance of the Imāmate in the person of the son of Mūsā, ᶜAlī al-Riḍā (d. 202/817-8)). Whereas in the case of Mūsā, it was certain that he left a son to succeed him, in the case of al-ᶜAskarī, the fact of his having left a son was in dispute. Consequently, in the case of Mūsā one does not hear of the argument about the necessity for an Imām to see his successor before his own death; rather the emphasis lies on his being al-Qā'im, the reverse of what was going to be stressed in the case of al-ᶜAskarī. When al-ᶜAskarī died, the controversial issue of the continuance of the Imāmate was once again raised, and divided the Imāmites into the Wāqifiyyah (i.e. those who stopped with the Imāmate of al-ᶜAskarī) and the Qaṭᶜiyyah (i.e. those who held his son al-Qā'im to have succeeded al-ᶜAskarī). The argument this time was focused on whether an Imām could die without making a clear designation of his

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successor.

Fraction (2)

This fraction maintained that the eleventh Imām, al-ᶜAskarī, had died and would become alive again after his death as al-Qā'im al-Mahdī, because, they contended, al-Qā'im was a person who rose after death and in consequence, had no successor. If al-ᶜAskarī had an offspring to prove his death then the return (rujūᶜ) would not be necessary and the Imāmate would automatically pass on to his son. As al-ᶜAskarī did not appoint anybody his waṣī (legatee), there is no doubt about his being al-Qā'im, since he died without leaving a successor. But, they added, he was living after death and was hidden because of fear, since like other Shīᶜite sects they too believed in the necessity of the ḥujjah on earth, whether alive, manifest (ẓāhir) or hidden. They quoted ᶜAlī (40/661) as having said, "O God, indeed You do not leave earth void of a ḥujjah from You, whether manifest or hidden, otherwise Your proofs and Your signs will become invalidated." For this reason al-ᶜAskarī continued to live after his death.[14]

Fraction (3)

This group believed that the Imāmate passed on to Jaᶜfar, the brother of al-ᶜAskarī, after the latter's death,

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by his own designation (nass). They contended that the Imāmate was Jaᶜfar's right from the beginning and so it returned to him.[15] When they were told that the Imām was not on good terms with his brother Jaᶜfar at all, so how could he designate him as his successor, they replied that this was only outwardly, otherwise Jaᶜfar was obedient to the Imām al-ᶜAskarī and followed him. This group argued for the Imāmate of Jaᶜfar following the line of argument of the Faṭḥiyyah who asserted that Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar (183/799) became Imām in accordance with the testament (waṣiyyah) of his brother ᶜAbd Allāh and not of his father Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq. Similarly, Jaᶜfar became Imām after his brother.[16]

Fraction (4)

This group maintained that Jaᶜfar was the Imām after al-ᶜAskarī not by the designation of his brother but by that of his father. Al-ᶜAskarī, they maintained, could not be considered as the Imām since he died without leaving an offspring. This rendered his claim to the Imāmate invalid. The reason for this was that the Imām does not die without appointing a successor or without having a son to succeed him. Al-ᶜAskarī did not designate anyone nor did he leave a son behind, hence he was not an Imām, they said. Secondly, it could not be [the Imāmate] vested in two brothers; in

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support of this, they quoted the tradition on the authority of the sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq:

> There will be no Imāmate vested in two brothers after al-Ḥasan (50/670-1) and al-Ḥusayn (61/680-81).[17]

Another addition to the doctrine of the Imāmate which should be traced back to Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar (183/799) is the clause about the Imāmate vested in two brothers. The claim of Mūsā's brother to the Imāmate was also discredited on the same ground, that after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn there would be no Imāmate vested in two brothers. Al-Kulaynī has reported several traditions on this point in his al-Kāfī.[18]

Fraction (5)

This fraction went further back in asserting the Imāmate of Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī who had predeceased his father the tenth Imām, ᶜAlī al-Hādī (254/868). They discredited the claims of both al-ᶜAskarī and his brother Jaᶜfar to the Imāmate on the grounds that there was no clear designation of the tenth Imām, nor did any testamentory document (waṣiyyah) exist to establish their right to the Imāmate. Of these two claimants, they further asserted, Jaᶜfar did not deserve to put forward his claim at all since his unrighteous and wicked character was well-known.[19] As for al-ᶜAskarī, they said, he died without leaving a successor which was a proof that

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Muḥammad, his elder brother was the Imām. Al-ᶜAskarī left no offspring and this was contrary to what was required in an Imām, namely, that he should have a successor. Therefore, Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī was the Imām as he, in every respect, was endowed with those virtues requisite in an Imām and he was al-Qā'im al-Mahdī.[20]

Fraction (6)

This group asserted that al-ᶜAskarī left a child by the name of Muḥammad[21] who was born two years before his father died. So all those who said that al-ᶜAskarī had no son to succeed him were wrong, and it was this son of al-ᶜAskarī who was al-Qā'im. They further asserted that he was hidden, being afraid of Jaᶜfar and his other enemies, and that this was his first ghaybah. He was the Qā'im, known in his father's time and designated by him.[22]

Fraction (7)

They asserted that a son was born to al-ᶜAskarī eight months after his death, and those who held that a son was born to him in his life-time were ill-advised because if he had been born the Imām would not have concealed him, since no one before him had been concealed. But the Imām died and a son was born after eight months which was "evident, logical and commonplace." Moreover, this was known to the Sultān

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(i.e., the Caliph) and to other people, and for this reason he did not inherit his share in his father's estate.[23]

Fraction (8)

This group held that al-ᶜAskarī had no son at all because they had sought for him and could not find him. If people insisted in maintaining that al-ᶜAskarī had a son, whereas in reality he did not, then such a claim could be put forward for any dead person who left no offspring, such as the Prophet and other Imāms. But there were reports which affirmed that they had no sons just as we have a report that al-ᶜAskarī had no son. The fact was, they held, that there was a son for him in concealment and when he was born he would be the Imām, even after a hundred years, because it was not right that the earth be void of the Ḥujjah.[24]

Fraction (9)

This group held the doctrine of the end of the Imāmate after al-ᶜAskarī. They argued that since prophethood (nubuwwah) could end with Muḥammad so could the Imāmate after al-ᶜAskarī. They did not doubt the fact of his being dead and according to them, it was not contrary to common sense that the Imāmate could terminate with him. To vindicate their position they cited a tradition on the authority of the fifth and sixth Imāms, al-Ṣādiqayn, to the effect that the earth cannot be

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void of the Ḥujjah except when God is enraged by the sins of mankind, at which time He takes away His Ḥujjah for as long as He deems necessary. Secondly, they said, it was known that there was no prophet between Muḥammad and Jesus, which proved that there was an interval of time when there was neither a prophet nor his waṣī. This period was similar to the intermission when there was no Ḥujjah, and God would send the Qā'im from among the descendants of Muḥammad when required, to restore the true faith as He had done before.[25]

Fraction (10)

This group was known as Nafīsiyyah because when Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī died he designated his brother Jaᶜfar as his successor, entrusting his will to the hands of his trustworthy young slave Nafīs, who was also entrusted with the books, the secret knowledge and the weapons needed by the ummah, to be handed over to his brother and successor Jaᶜfar. No one else knew about this arrangement except his father ᶜAlī al-Hādī, the tenth Imām. But when Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī died those who had favoured his brother al-ᶜAskarī for the Imāmate followed him and became jealous of Nafīs. Nafīs being afraid of them and fearing that the Imāmate might be invalidated, called Jaᶜfar and handed over what his master had entrusted him. Consequently, Jaᶜfar became the Imām and

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not al-ᶜAskarī, who, according to their assertion, was not designated by his father. The Nafīsiyyah held Jaᶜfar to be al-Qā'im and the best of the people after the Prophet.[26]

Fraction (11)

This group maintained that the Imām was al-ᶜAskarī, but they were not sure who succeeded him, his son or his brother, although they accepted the doctrine that there could not be a time when the earth could be void of the Ḥujjah of God. So they put off any statement until the matter became clear for them.[27]

Fraction (12)

This is the stand taken by the Imāmites, the group most relevant to this thesis. They maintained quite a different position with regard to the successor of al-ᶜAskarī. They held that the Ḥujjah of God was present on earth, namely, the son of al-ᶜAskarī. He was the one who had been designated by his father in accordance with the method laid down by the previous traditions. There could be no Imāmate vested in two brothers after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and it was also important to bear in mind that two brothers had not Imām at the same time; rather, they followed each other in sequence.[28] Nor could there be the Imāmate of one who

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predeceased his father or of the descendants of such a person,[29] because such a person could not be considered the Hujjah of God for mankind, since mankind needs to get guidance about religious injunctions at all times. Nor could the earth be void of the Imām even for an hour.

By these arguments the Imāmites sought to disprove the contentions of all the other groups mentioned above and maintained that al-ᶜAskarī died leaving his son as his successor, who was the Imām after him until such time that, by the permission of God, his status became clear, and his position became manifest for people as had happened in the case of his predecessors. The Imāmites added that God had every power to do what was expedient in the case of this Imām, whether to manifest him or to conceal him when the time came. The people, they said, should not seek for reasons for what God does, nor should they mention the name of this Imām,[30] or ask his whereabouts until such time that God decided to reveal his secret. Thus discussion of this question was prohibited, for if the answer were known to his followers, that would endanger his life and theirs too. It was also improper for any believer to choose an Imām for himself who had not been chosen by God. After all, God manages the affairs of His creatures in the best possible way, to the best of their interest, and the Imām

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knows the situation better than his followers (Shīᶜah) do. They quoted the Imām al-Ṣādiq as saying:

> his (al-Qā'im's) authority will become manifest and his place well-known, his lineage will not be disputed nor will his birth be concealed. He will be on the tongues of all people /when God decides/.

They asserted that there would be a curse of God on those who would name him. Among his followers were some who had met with him and had reported statements on his authority and had conveyed his greetings without naming him. This, according to the Imāmites, was in accordance with what Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar related about not taking his name, because, the ruler would be a tyrant during the epoch in which the Imām lived, disregarding the rights of his subjects, and would imprison anyone who reported having seen the Imām, or named him. The preceding Imāms had reported a number of traditions about the Qā'im, that his birth would not be acknowledged except when he arose. But this rising would take place only after his reappearance and when he became known as the Imām, son of the Imām, and the legatee, son of the legatee. Nevertheless, those who were trusted by him and were also trusted by his father, knew about him. Although fewer in number, they would be steadfast in following al-ᶜAskarī's son until such

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time that God commanded him to come forward. This is what the Imāmites maintained about the Imāmate after Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī.[31]

Fraction (13)

This group maintained doctrines very similar to those held by the Faṭḥiyyah[32] before them. They asserted that al-ᶜAskarī who succeeded his father as the Imām, had died and Jaᶜfar, his brother, had succeeded him as the Imām, just as had happened in the case of Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar, who became the Imām after ᶜAbd Allāh, his brother, according to the tradition which states that the eldest among the sons of the Imām succeeds his father. They accepted the tradition that two brothers cannot become Imāms in succession, after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; but they added that this could be true only when the preceding Imām had a son to succeed him, otherwise it was inevitable that the Imāmate should pass to his brother.

Another significant development in the Imāmate doctrine in this group was the acceptance of a tradition which says that only an Imām washes the dead body of the previous Imām. This, they contended, happened in the case of Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar who washed his father's body by the order of ᶜAbd Allāh who was then the Imām, while Mūsā was Imām al-Ṣāmit (al-(the silent).[33] These are the Pure Faṭḥiyyah, who consider

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it lawful for a brother to succeed to the Imāmate, if the eldest of the sons of the Imām has no son to succeed him; therefore, they say, the Imāmate of Jaᶜfar is valid.[34]

Al-Nawbakhtī's account ends with the above-mentioned thirteen fractions, although he says in the beginning that there were fourteen subsects after the death of al-ᶜAskarī. On the other hand, al-Shahrastānī mentions another sect which, being uncertain as regards the facts, believed that one of the members of the Prophet's family was the Imām, -- al-riḍā min āl-Muḥammad.[35] This was the phrase used by some groups when there was doubt concerning the successor to the Imāmate. This group was also called al-Wāqifa, meaning 'uncertain' or 'in doubt'; this group remained 'in doubt' until God manifested His ḥujjah by revealing his face without any miracle to support his claim. Rather, his only miracle would be the following he would have of a people who would obey him without any controversy or vindication.[36]

In Ibn Hazm's classification of the Shīᶜite sects the doctrinal position taken by the Imāmite, the twelfth fraction according to al-Nawbakhtī, regarding the twelfth Imām is mentioned under the Qiṭṭiᶜiyyah or Qaṭᶜiyyah group of the Imāmites.[37] To comprehend the use of the word Qaṭᶜiyyah it is necessary to contrast it with its antithesis, al-Wāqifiyyah.

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The problem seemed to surround the reality of the preceding Imām's death and the question of his successor, which obviously depended on it. The Wāqifiyyah, those in doubt or uncertain, maintained that the Imāmate after Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq (148/765-66) passed on to his son Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar (183/799-800) and that the latter was alive and would continue to live until he ruled (yamlik) the East and West of the earth filling it with justice and equity.[38] On the other hand, the Qaṭᶜiyyah were those who definitely affirmed that the death of Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar was real and the Imāmate was transferred to his son ᶜAlī al-Riḍā (202/817-18),[39] in opposition to the Wāqifiyyah. Al-Shahrastānī uses the term al-Wāqifiyyah also for the Ismāᶜīliyyah, who believed in the return of Ismāᶜīl, Mūsā's brother.[40]

Gradually, these two titles were also used to designate those who believed that the Imāmate ended with al-ᶜAskarī, who would return as the Mahdī (al-Wāqifiyyah) and those who believed in the reality of al-ᶜAskarī's death and transferred the Imāmate to his son al-Mahdī, the twelfth Imām (al-Qaṭᶜiyyah).[41] The followers of this latter belief constitute the bulk of the Shīᶜites and with the spread of the doctrine of the twelve Imāms and the extinction of the other Shīᶜite fractions, the term Qaṭᶜiyyah was used only

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for those who believed in al-ᶜAskarī's death and transferred the Imāmate to the Mahdī, as a synonym for a word of definitely later origin, Ithnā ᶜAshariyyah -- The Twelvers.[42] It must be noted here that the Qaṭᶜiyyah, more specifically the Imāmites, have used the argument that their sect has been immune from extinction as the strongest proof of its truthfulness.[43]

An analysis of al-Nawbakhtī's exposition of the Imāmite fraction

The description of al-Nawbakhtī of the fractions of the Shīᶜites in the third/ninth century is representative of the Imāmites themselves, because in discussing the twelfth group, which according to him is the most right and which represents the viewpoint of the Qaṭᶜiyyah or Ithnā ᶜAshariyyah, he refutes all other views on the subject of the successor of the eleventh Imām, al-ᶜAskarī. In all probability there also seems to be still another view maintained by a group of the Imāmites which Ibn Nadīm ascribes to Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī, another great scholar of the Imāmites who died around 923 A.D., and which, understandably, al-Nawbakhtī did not mention. Ibn Nadīm says,

> He (Abū Sahl) had an idea about the Qā'im of the family of Muḥammad which no one had before him. This was what he used to say, "I tell you that the rightful Imām was Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan and

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> that, although he died in concealment, there has arisen in the cause during the concealment his son, and so it will be with his son's issue, until God consummates his dominion by causing him to appear."[44]

This view and the one presented by al-Nawbakhtī in the twelfth fraction basically represent Imāmite views, proclaiming Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan as the Imām after al-ᶜAskarī, and reveal an important fact that the twelfth Imām was not mentioned as the Mahdī in the early period of the Imāmite Shīᶜism. The word Qā'im, so frequently used in the traditions and elsewhere to designate the twelfth Shīᶜī Imām, refers to the lawful Imām who is a lineal descendant of the Prophet; thus the full title -- al-Qā'im min āl Muḥammad, is invariably used in the earlier works, but not the word Mahdī. Al-Nawbakhtī does speak about those who considered al-ᶜAskarī the Mahdī, such as the first fraction in his Firaq.[45] But when expounding the Imāmite stand, in other words his own, which he considers the most balanced and right, he does not say anything about the son of al-ᶜAskarī being the Mahdī, especially the one promised by the Prophet in the traditions; this is contrary to what the other sects maintained about their Imām, whoever it was. The doctrine ascribed to Abū Sahl also, however unusual it might seem, does not say anything about the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām. Keeping in mind the period in which the Firaq

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was composed, the period of the Short Occultation (al-ghaybat al-qaṣīrah), that is, the period of early Imāmism, is it possible that the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām is a later addition to justify the prolonged disappearance of the Hidden Imām?

Besides Abū Sahl there were others who held that the twelfth Imām had died and that he would rise again at the End of Time, a view which al-Nawbakhtī does not have in his exposition of the fractions. Only Ṭūsī and before him al-Mufīd mention this fraction.[46] Furthermore, Ṭūsī refers to still another group which believed in thirteen Imāms, assuming that the twelfth Imām had died and the Imāmate had passed to his son.[47] Even al-Ḥallāj, according to Louis Massignon, used to say that the twelfth Imām had died and there would be no manifest Imām and that the Day of Judgement was at hand.[48]

All this belief in the death of the twelfth Imām leads one to assume that at least, at the beginning of Twelver Imāmite history, which, in my opinion, should be placed at the end of the third/ninth and beginning of the fourth/tenth century, no idea about the twelfth Imām being the Mahdī had yet been formulated, whereas this idea became a prominent feature of the Shīʿite creed in the later period. The sources do reveal this much, that the titles preferred

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for the twelfth Imām in the beginning seem to have been confined to three, of which at least two have much more of a political emphasis than an eschatological one; the third one indicates essentially what an Imām as an heir of the prophetic mission, should have. These three titles are, respectively: al-Qā'im; Ṣāḥib al-Amr; and al-Ḥujjah. These will be discussed separately below in order to see how they have been used in the sources of this period.

The title al-Qā'im

The translation of this title rendered by Massignon, "chef redresseur des torts", seems to be very close to the idea connoted therein; an idea which is put forward in the traditions mentioned by the Imāmite theologians on the authority of the Imāms. For instance, Abū Sa^{c}īd al-Khurāsānī asked the sixth Imām Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq, "Why is al-Qā'im known as al-Qā'im?" He answered, "Because he will rise (qāma) after his death for an important task, and will rise by the command of God."[49] Another tradition, reported on the authority of the fifth Imām al-Bāqir, states,

> Our task resembles that of a person who is put to death by God for a hundred years and then is raised again.

The resurrection of al-Qā'im after death seems to

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have been accepted at first, as we saw in the second fraction in al-Nawbakhtī's exposition above, but was later refuted by the Imāmite theologians like Tūsī who, in vindicating the Imāmite doctrine of the ever present Imām, says that al-Qā'im is not the one who will rise after having died, for the simple reason that such an assumption would necessitate the earth's being void of a Hujjah until his return.[50] Much later, in the 10th/16th century, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī defended the Imāmite viewpoint by offering an interpretation of the above-mentioned traditions. He said that, in such traditions, the death of al-Qā'im should be taken figuratively; in other words, al-Qā'im's memory would die in the minds of people to such an extent that they would assume that his bones had decomposed, and then, just as God did in the case of ʿUzayr (Ezra) the prophet, who was brought to life after a real death of a hundred years, al-Qā'im would also be made to reappear hundreds of years after his occultation (ghaybah). The other argument used by Majlisī in this vindication is a most common one among Muslim traditionists, namely those traditions being wāḥid (rare) do not stand the test of authenticity.[51]

Al-Nuʿmānī, who is a primary source on the question of al-Ghaybah, lived during the Short Occultation of the

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twelfth Imām. He prefers the title al-Qā'im to al-Mahdī in his work on this subject; if he does mention both, al-Qā'im al-Mahdī seems to be the order used by him. This further indicates that al-Qā'im is the main title and al-Mahdī the secondary one. In addition; there exists a tradition which clearly shows that the early Shīᶜites must have been confused by the additional title al-Mahdī given to their Imām. It is reported on the authority of Abū Baṣīr[52] that when the sixth Imām was asked, "Are al-Mahdī and al-Qā'im one (and the same person)?" The Imām said, "Yes." So he was then asked, "Why was he named Mahdī?" He answered, "Because he guides to the things secret; and he is named Qā'im because he will rise after death. He will rise for an important task."[53] Another tradition with a similar theme is related by al-Nuᶜmānī. The tradition reports that the fifth Imām said,

> When al-Qā'im from the family of the Prophet[54] will rise he will distribute equally among the people and will establish justice among his subjects. Thus those who obey him will obey God and those who defy him will defy God; but he will be called al-Mahdī, the one who will guide, since he will guide to the secret matters (amr al-khafī) and will bring out the Torah and all other books of God from a cave in Antioch and will rule the people of the Torah according to the Torah, the people of the Gospel according to the Gospel, and the people of the Qur'ān according to the Qur'ān.[55]

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This tradition throws further light on the importance of the title al-Qā'im in the early Imāmite sources, where the use of al-Mahdī seems to be only an attribute. All Imāms are Qā'im. The fifth Imām al-Bāqir was once asked about al-Qā'im. He struck the sixth Imām al-Ṣādiq with his hand and declared, "By God, he is the Qā'im of the family of the Prophet." When al-Bāqir passed away (113/731-2) the one who had heard this from the deceased Imām came to the sixth Imām and informed him about it. The Imām said, "The report by Jābir is right." Then he added, "Perhaps you do not believe that every Imām is al-Qā'im, in succession."[56]

The function of al-Qā'im

In some traditions the function of the last Qā'im is given special emphasis as this report shows:

> All Imāms are Qā'im[57] but that Qā'im who is going to inherit the Prophet's banner, Joseph's shirt, Moses' rod and Solomon's ring "is the one who will once again spread the banner of the Prophet which was last spread by ʿAlī at the Battle of the Camel. [58]

Majlisī, in his commentary on al-Kāfī of al-Kulaynī, explains that al-Qā'im in the Shīʿī tradition refers to the person who will rise with a sword; but when it refers to all the Imāms it means those "who upheld the Imāmate: al-Qa'im bi'l-Imāmah; so the twelfth Imām is al-Qā'im whose rise against injustice is awaited.[59] Hence he will be the one

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who will take revenge on those who killed al-Ḥusayn,[60] and even their descendants, adds another report;[61] he will bring back purity to Islam and will call people to Islam as did the Apostle of God.[62] The redressing of the wrongs committed by the ummah against the Ahl al-Bayt is al-Qā'im's main political function. This political emphasis in al-Qā'im's function is so great that the Imāmites maintain that he replaces what they regard as the tyrannical caliphate of the Umayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids, whose swords had not spared the Family.[63]

It is important to note that this early hope in al-Qā'im's temporal victory did not materialize until a much later period of Imāmite history, when this phase of his function was performed by the Ṣafavid, Shāh Ismāᶜīl I. Majlisī did not hesitate to interpret the following tradition in favour of Shāh Ismāᶜīl. The tradition is cited by Sayyid Mīr Lawḥī, an arch-enemy of Majlisī, in criticism of Majlisī's translation of this tradition about al-Qā'im. He writes:

> But the second tradition of the two, which became the main purpose of Ḥadrat-i Ākhund (Majlisī) in composing his work on the subject of Rajᶜah (Return) and mentioning this tradition, is what Hadrat-i Ākhund quotes on the authority of Imām Jaᶜfar who said, "When the Qā'im will rise in Khurāsān, he will proceed to Kūfah and thence to Multān, passing through the Jazirah

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of Banū Kāwān, but al-Qā'im among us will rise in Jīlān among the people of Daylam and there will appear for my son the Turkish flags....". This tradition has been rendered into Persian by Hadrat-i Ākhund as follows: "When a king rises from Khurāsān and conquers Kūfah and Multān and passes through the Jazīrah of Banū Kāwān, which is in the vicinity of Basrah, at that time a king will rise among us in Jīlān who will be supported and assisted by the people of Barkah, which is in the vicinity of Astarābād...." Then Hadrat-i Ākhund adds, "it is clear that the one rising in Khurāsān indicates the Amīrs of the Turks, Chengiz Khān... and the one rising in Jīlān indicates the King, the protector of the Religion, Shāh Ismā'īl Ṣafavī, may God associate him /on the Day of Resurrection/ with the Pure Imāms; that is the reason why the sixth Imām refers to him as 'my son' /in the tradition/." Thus Hadrat-i Ākhund in taking such a rare and weak tradition, as far as transmitters are concerned, a tradition which if at all taken as authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) must be interpreted as an obscure (mutashābih) one, as this one is, should realize that it is against the Sharī'ah. To interpret the tradition without comprehending it or for worldly purposes, following one's instinct, is against the set principle and is unlawful.[64]

There is no doubt that this tradition must be taken as a later fabrication. But the important point to remember is that Majlisī could successfully identify Shāh Ismā'īl Ṣafavī, whose political success in establishing the Imāmite religion as an official state religion is the main purpose of Majlisī's interpretation, with al-Qā'im of Ahl al-Bayt.

Careful study of our primary sources indicates that in all probability, the political success of al-Qā'im was

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expected in near future, after the disappearance of the twelfth Imām, and not at the End of Time, which must be attributed to the later doctrine of the ghaybah. The other title used for the twelfth Imām, namely, ṣāḥib al-amr ('the master of the authority'), is further evidence for our contention.

The title ṣāḥib al-Amr: 'The Master of the Command'

This is another title of the twelfth Imām which appears side by side with al-Qā'im. The Imām Jaʿfar al-ṣādiq was once asked:

> Are you the Master of this Authority (ṣāḥib hādha al-amr) /to which all the Shīʿites are looking forward/?
> The Imām replied, "No."
> "Is it your son?" he was asked.
> He said, "No."
> "Is he the son of your son?"
> He said, "No."
> "Then who is it?"
> He said, "He is the one who will fill the earth with justice as it is filled with wickedness. There is a period of intermission between the Imāms just as there was before the Prophet of God emerged."[65]

Another tradition is related by al-Kulaynī. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAṭā, a close companion of the fifth Imām al-Bāqir, once said to the Imām,

> There are, in reality, many of your followers (shīʿah) in Iraq, and I solemnly declare that there is none like you in your family. Why

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> do not you come out? The Imām said, "O ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAtā, you have given ear to nonsense. By God, I am not your Ṣāḥib al-Amr." ʿAbd Allāh asked, "Who then is our Master (Ṣāḥib)?" The Imām said, "Look for the one whose birth will be concealed from the people. He is your Master. For sure, there is none among us who if well-known among the people and on their lips can escape an unjust death."[66]

The Ṣāḥib al-Amr is supposed to arise with the sword and fight those who have wronged the Ahl al-Bayt. In consequence, he becomes the Ṣāḥib al-Sayf -- the Master of the Sword.[67] More significant is the time when the Master of Sword will appear. As one would expect, several traditions mention that the day will be the day of ʿĀshūrā (the tenth of Muḥarram). Obviously, the question arises why the day of ʿĀshūrā? ʿĀshūrā is the day on which al-Ḥusayn was killed at Karbalā' -- the day when the Family of the Prophet was wronged by the Umayyads. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Shīʿites consider this day to be a symbol of the afflictions suffered by the Family and use it to dramatize the claims of Ahl al-Bayt, as the most rightful and deserving to be the successors of the Prophet.[68] The tradition is mentioned by Ibn Bābūyah that "Al-Qā'im will rise on Saturday, the ʿĀshūrā of Muḥarram -- in which al-Ḥusayn was killed."[68] All this leads us to confirm that the early Shīʿites expected not only that their twelfth Imām but before that other Imāms

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would rise against the existing state of affairs and redress their grievances against the caliphal authority. Al-Kulaynī has preserved a tradition which states that a close companion of the eighth Imām, ʿAlī al-Riḍā, once told the Imām,

> I hope you are the Ṣāḥib al-Amr and that God will bestow on you the Imāmate /openly/ without need of the sword, since people have paid allegiance to you and coins have been struck in your name. The Imām said, "There is no Imām among us who after having attained fame and having been referred to regarding religious questions, and having openly received taxes due to him, who will not die in his bed /of poison/; until that time when God chooses a child from among us as an Imām, whose birth and upbringing is concealed and whose descent is well-known."[69]

So far we have discussed at length the usage of two of the most frequently used titles of the twelfth Imām in the early Shīʿī traditions, and their immediate connotation; both titles denote authority of a more temporal and political nature than is implied by the messianic figure to appear in the future, which seems to be a concept of a later date. Even the word mahdī, as we have seen above, implied a different idea in the beginning where it was used to show the special mark of the Shīʿī Imām who was endowed with a knowledge of secret matters and of the revealed scriptures of God.[70] This meaning should be contrasted with the much later one of the word mahdī, which has become the meaning accepted even today by Imāmite writers:

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> The twelfth Imām is known as Mahdī because he [illegible] himself has found the way, and has been entrusted with the task of guiding mankind. Those who will live under his rule will all be Muslims and the followers of the Qur'ān by the favour of his guidance.[71]

I have not come across this explanation of the word mahdī in any primary sources which I have referred to. I will return to a consideration of this title below. We must now discuss another popular title of the twelfth Imām and explain its importance in Imāmite terminology. Perhaps, this is the only title which is indicative of the religious role of the twelfth Imām and which will assist in establishing a consistent relationship of the thesis expressed above with the doctrine of ghaybah (occultation), which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The title al-Hujjah

The usual translation given for this title is "the Proof",[72] but somehow this does not give the idea implied in the full title of an Imām in Shī'ī dogmatics: the Hujjah of God (the Proof of God). In my opinion, a more plausible translation of this term would be "the Competent Authority",[73] since this is what a Shī'ī Imāmite theologian means when he uses this title for his Imām. "The Proof" is too literal to convey the sense of "the Competent Authority" in its

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relationship with God who reserves the power of appointing this 'authority' among mankind, to enable them to acquire the knowledge (ma^{c}rifah) of the Creator; this is the force of the phrase: "the Ḥujjah of God".

The famous citation, which appears in almost all early Shī^{c}ī sources puts the following speech in the mouth of ^{c}Alī b. Abū Ṭālib. He is reported to have said in the course of one of his rhetorical discourses from the pulpit of Kūfah:

> Oh God, there is no way but to have your Ḥujaj (Competent Authorities) on earth, who should follow one another in sequence for mankind in order to guide them to your religion, and inform them about You, so that Your friends do not get scattered and overwhelmed, be they manifest and not obeyed, or hidden and being looked forward to with a view to their appearance. If their person gets concealed from the people by their quietness (hudnat) their age-old knowledge gets spread among the people and their decency (ādāb) becomes firmly rooted in the hearts of the believers to incite them to put it into practice.[74]

In the above citation, the Ḥujaj of God are the ones who guide mankind to God's religion and inform them about Him. This makes it necessary for the Ḥujjah to be an authority on religious matters who can be relied upon because of his competence in those sciences. Another tradition which supports this suggested meaning of the title is reported on the authority of the sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq:

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> There continues to be on earth a Hujjah from God who knows halāl (lawful) and harām (unlawful) and invites people to the way of God.[75]

The twelfth Imām, in this sense, is referred to as the Hujjah of God. Although, the sources say, he has a name, "it is unlawful to call him by his name" or "to reveal his name".[76] The tenth Imām (to whom only a small number of traditions are credited) is reported to have said,

> My successor is al-Hasan /al-ᶜAskarī/, how would you /my followers/ react to his successor? The person asked, "What do you mean, O son of the Prophet?" The Imām said, "Because you will not see his face, nor will it be lawful for you to mention his name." "Then how should we style him?" the person asked. "Say, the Hujjah from the family of the Prophet," said the Imām.

It will be worthwhile to see the different ways in which the Imāmites have designated their Imāms and the Prophet as the Hujjah, in order to prove that the earth must have such a 'competent authority' at all times. It is, perhaps, the insistence of the Shīᶜites on this point which has led some scholars to the interpretation that the Imāmites maintain that the Imām is even more important than the Prophet. In my readings of al-Kāfī I have come across quite a few traditions which assert the superiority of the Imāmah over Nubuwwah (prophethood). For example, the sixth

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Imām is supposed to have addressed one of his disciples as follows:

> O Khaythamah,[77] we are the tree of prophethood and house of mercy; we are the keys of wisdom, the essence of knowledge, and the locus of apostleship, the frequenting-place of angels and repositories of the secret of God. We are God's trust (wadīᶜah) to His servants, and His great sacred object (ḥaram). We are the covenant (ᶜahd) of God (with men), and he who keeps our covenant has kept God's covenant.[78]

This and many similar traditions show the extreme devotion of the Shīᶜites to the Imāms. But if looked at from a different angle it can be seen that however exalted the position of the Imām may be, he is clearly distinguished from the Prophet without whom he can not exist. For the Imāmites, the doctrine of the Imāmate is an integral part of the doctrine of prophethood, and it is mainly in this respect that the Imām, who is considered to be a Ḥujjah like a prophet, is in reality necessary for the existence and well-being of the world. The following tradition will throw more light on the function of the Ḥujjah and how the twelfth Imām is considered as one of these Ḥujaj, necessary for existence.

One of the companions of the sixth Imām reports that:

> One day I told Abū ᶜAbd Allah /āl-Ṣādiq/, "Indeed God is more exalted and honourable than to be acknowledged by His creatures; rather, the creatures should be acknowledged through God." "You are

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right," he said. I continued, "Anyone who does not receive a revelation should look for a prophet and when he comes across them he discovers that they are the Ḥujjah and obedience to them is obligatory (farḍ)." I asked the people, "Do you know that the Prophet was the Ḥujjah from God for His creatures?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Well, when the Prophet passed away, who was the Ḥujjah for His creatures then?" They said, "The Qur'ān." So I looked into the Qur'ān and saw that every group such as the Murji'ites, the Qadarites and even the Zindiqs who did not believe in it, argued with each other by quoting verses from it, and defeated the great scholars (al-rijāl) /of the Qur'ān/ by quoting and interpreting the verses the way they desired to do. From this I realized that the Qur'ān cannot be the Ḥujjah without the custodian (qayyim) who can say that which is true. So I asked them, "Who is the custodian of the Qur'ān?" They said, "Ibn Masᶜūd, ᶜUmar and Ḥudhayfah who knew the Qur'ān very well." Then I asked, "Do they know all of it?" They said, "No," and I could find none of whom it could be said that he knew the entire Qur'ān except ᶜAlī. Thus when something was discussed among the people every group denied that they knew its answer except ᶜAlī. As a result, I bear witness that ᶜAlī was the custodian of the Qur'ān and obedience to him was obligatory and that he was the Ḥujjah for the people after the Prophet and that what he said about the Qur'ān is right." The Imām said, "May God have mercy on you."[79]

In this sense then, ᶜAlī or any other Imām was that person through whom /inaccessible inner meanings of the /the Qur'ān and the knowledge of God become accessible; and such a person serves as /evidence among mankind of His true the will, as interpreted by these 'competent authorities'. Thus the Prophet and the Imām both stand as the Ḥujjah of

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God on an equal footing, or rather, the later Ḥujjah (i.e. the Imām) is even more important because the true interpretation of the revelation depends entirely on him, since it would otherwise fall into the hands of those who are incompetent in performing this crucial duty. In Imāmite theological works, the term ḥujjah then designates the category formed by prophets and Imāms together, in that either of them must always exist as the guide to God's will. This explains the significance of al-Kulaynī's naming a section of his compilation al-Kāfī: Kitāb al-Ḥujjah; this section deals with both the Prophet and the Imāms. They form the chain of Ḥujaj who are the representatives of God among His creatures. As the above report shows, only such a Ḥujjah can solve the religious problems which arise because of the misinterpretation of the Word of God. They are the authorized interpreters of God, and the present such authority, according to the Imāmites, is the twelfth Imām -- al-Ḥujjah.

The Muᶜtazilites, as Ibn Bābūyah tells us, used to criticize the views of the Imāmites about al-Ḥujjat al-Ghā'ib -- the Hidden Ḥujjah. How could such a person, they said, be considered as the Ḥujjah, when people had not even seen him or known him.[80] To this, Ibn Bābūyah retorts that

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the Hidden Ḥujjah is like the heart in the body, which, although hidden, plays the most vital role of guiding the various parts of the body to the best path.[81]

The title al-Ḥujjah, in contrast to the other titles which are often used to designate the twelfth Imām, emphasises the religious and spiritual aspects of his function; otherwise he is al-Qā'im bi'l-sayf or Ṣāḥib al-Amr, which as we have shown above, does not make the Imām the messianic Mahdī with eschatological overtones which the later sources accentuate.

Conclusion

My thesis, consequently, is that the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imāmite Imām was a later development in the theory of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām, which combined the already known belief in the coming of al-Mahdī to restore justice and equity with the prolonged occultation of the twelfth Imām. The most likely place where one might have expected mention of the twelfth Imām as the expected Mahdī was in al-Nawbakhtī's exposition of the Imāmite belief about the successor of the eleventh Imām. The whole section dealing with the twelfth group, the Imāmites, reveals the important fact that at that early stage of Imāmite history, the period coinciding with the Short Occultation of the twelfth Imām,

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most probably, the absence of the Imām was taken as temporary, and he was expected to appear soon as al-Qā'im. This must have lasted until the end of the period known as the Short Occultation (329/940-41). Al-Nawbakhtī, who may have died as early as 314/926, was highly esteemed as an Imāmite theologian, and it seems very unlikely that if such an idea had already been formulated among the Imāmites he would not have mentioned it at all.

We have another piece of documentary evidence which I think should receive serious consideration. This is the Ziyārāt[82] of the Shīᶜite Imāms. So far very little attention has been paid to this genre of information which, in my opinion, has preserved some very early beliefs about the Shīᶜī Imāms which, later on, were systematized in Imāmite dogmatics. I would go even further in asserting that the later sober and moderate views on the doctrine of the Imāmate were the reformulation of these very early beliefs which are found in the Ziyārāt. It is, therefore, essential to our thesis to examine this genre of pious literature and see how the twelfth Imām is addressed in it.

The Ziyārāt and the twelfth Imām

It is well established that the Shīᶜites from very early times have shown great reverence for the sanctuaries

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and shrines of their Imāms. As early as 65/684-5, just four years after al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom (61/680-1) at Karbalā', we find Sulaymān b. Ṣurad going with his followers to al-Ḥusayn's grave,[83] which it seems had already become a celebrated place of pilgrimage for the Shī^{c}ites. Several traditions appear on the authority of the sixth Imām about the virtue of such visits to the Shrine of al-Ḥusayn as compared with the Ḥajj, encouraging the Shī^{c}ites to perform pilgrimage at this shrine. By the time of the Imāms at Sāmarrā, the tenth and eleventh Imāms, the practice seems to have been common and numerous Shī^{c}ites had been visiting the shrine when in 236/850 al-Mutawakkil, the ^{c}Abbāsid, destroyed the tomb of al-Ḥusayn and had the ground levelled and sown; he prohibited, under heavy penalties, visits to the holy places.[84]

There is extant a work on the Ziyārāt of the Imāms which is crucial and, to the best of my knowledge, an extremely early source on this subject. The work is entitled Kāmil al-Ziyārāt by a renowned Imāmite traditionist, Ja^{c}far b. Muḥammad b. Qawlawayh al-Qummī, referred to in most sources as Ibn Qawlawayh. Ṭūsī in his List of the Shi'ah Books mentions the work under a slightly variant title -- Jāmi^{c} al-Ziyārāt.[85] The author of this important work, according to al-Quṭb al-Rāwandī, died in the year 368/978-9.[86]

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In this book of Ziyārāt, Ibn Qawlawayh begins with the ziyārāt of the Prophet in Madīnah and ends with the ziyārāt to be read at the shrine of the ᶜAskariyayn -- the two ᶜAskarīs in Sāmarrā -- the tenth and eleventh Imāms. The most detailed section is on the ziyārāt of al-Ḥusayn to be recited on different occasions throughout the year. But no ziyārāt are mentioned for the twelfth Imām although, had these existed, they must have been reported by the time when Ibn Qawlawayh compiled this book, around the year 368/978-9, i.e., approximately forty years after the Short Occultation (329/940-1). Majlisī, our later source for ziyārāt, in his Kitāb al-Mazār, a part of his encyclopaedic Biḥār al-Anwār[87] cites several ziyārāt of the twelfth Imām, of which some are definitely of later origin. One of these, which I think must be the earliest, is mentioned on the authority of the twelfth Imām himself in reply to a letter sent by one of the prominent Shīᶜites, ᶜAbd Allāh b. Ḥimyarī. The Imām instructed him, "When you intend to use us as your intermediaries in your prayer to God and refer to us, say as God has referred to us: 'Peace be on you, O descendants of Yāsin.'"[88] In this ziyārah, which I have carefully examined, there is no mention of the title Mahdī at all. The twelfth Imām is not addressed as Mahdī, the one promised by the Prophet. This is the first ziyārah mentioned in this

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section of the Book on the Shrines. Taking into account the method of arranging material adopted by Majlisī, who normally begins with the most authentic ziyārah, a fact which he does not reveal openly,[89] we would be inclined to conclude that this is the most authentic ziyārah of the twelfth Imām, according to the Imāmites. Majlisī goes on to mention several others of which one deserves special attention as it is reported to have been taken from the older Kitāb al-Mazār al-Kabir, by Muḥammad b. Jaᶜfar al-Mashhadī (b. 510/1116-17) and also reported by al-Mufīd.[90]

Of all the early Imāmite theologians, al-Mufīd impresses one by the soberness and apparent objectivity of his writings, and for this reason considerable weight should probably be attached to his point of view.[91] He reports the ziyārāt of the twelfth Imām in which the word mahdī occurs in the plural form as a qualifying epithet for all the Imāms, and has nothing to indicate the special use of the term in the heightened sense. Of course, the future appearance of the Imām is referred to in almost all the ziyārāt, most of the time as al-Qā'im who will restore justice and equity, as a Ḥujjah of God for His creatures, or as Baqiyyat Allāh, apparently a favourite title of later origin. A man asked al-Ṣādiq, it is narrated, "Is it proper to greet the Qā'im as Amīr al-Mu'minīn?" "No," said the Imām, "this

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epithet was specially meant for ᶜAlī only; no one before him had this title and no one except a non-believer would call himself by this title." So the man asked, "What is the proper way to greet him then?" The Imām replied, "Say, peace be on you, O Baqiyyat Allāh," and continued to read this verse of the Qur'ān: "That which is left by God unto you is good for you if ye be believers."(11.86). Thus Baqiyyat Allāh means the 'Last one from God' or the 'One Left by God'.[92]

The other ziyārah in Majlisī's collection is mentioned on the authority of Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265-66), a much later source, in which the twelfth Imām is addressed as al-Ḥujjah al-Qā'im al-Mahdī, in proper sequence.

In Ibn Qawlawayh's collection, as seen above, there is no ziyārah of the twelfth Imām, but there is a very early ziyārah of al-Ḥusayn which is recommended to be read on the day of ᶜĀshūrā and which has the word Mahdī accompanied by the word Imām; in my opinion, the term 'Mahdī' should be taken here as a mere title, although the idea of future leadership is implied. The sentence runs:

> I (the pilgrim) ask God to enable me both to attain the praiseworthy status bestowed on you /O Imāms/ by God, and to take revenge with a rightly guided (mahdī) Imām, who will be manifest (ẓāhir) and the one speaking the truth (nāṭiq bi'l-ḥaqq) among you.[93]

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All other ziyārāt of al-Husayn, of later origin, have the word mahdi used as a title common to all the Imāms, but Ibn Qawlawayh, although he reports the same ziyārāt, does not use the term even once -- an indication that the word was inserted at a later period.[94]

The Mosque of Sahlā and the Twelfth Imām

Besides the ziyārāt the other important evidence in support of our thesis is the description of the mosque of Sahlā, which in later Imāmite sources holds a special place of reverence as the stopping place (manzil) of the twelfth Imām when he reappears as the Mahdī. The mosque is, significantly, in Kūfah, at a distance of one mile from the historic great mosque of Kūfah (Jāmiᶜ al-Kūfah) where ᶜAlī was assassinated in 40/660-1. Ibn Qawlawayh, as a primary source on these places of pilgrimage, devotes much space in explaining the special prayers to be held at these two mosques in Kūfah as recommended by the Imāms. The supererogatory prayer performed in these mosques holds special rewards for the Shīᶜite who comes from a distant land to pay his respects to the place where ᶜAlī delivered his famous khutbas. But there is no tradition concerning either the Sahlā's being the stopping place of the twelver Mahdī or its importance because of anything to do with the

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twelfth Imām.[95] On the other hand, in the later sources this mosque attains unique excellence by virtue of this tradition:

> It is related on the authority of the sixth Imām that the mosque of Sahlā will be the stopping place of our Sāḥib, when he reappears.[96]

How many traditions of this type, which form a large part of the Imāmite ḥadīth literature, are themselves of later origin, is hard to tell. But in this case it is likely that the above tradition was fabricated in the later period, or may have been a later interpretation of the following tradition in Ibn Qawlawayh's description of the excellence of the mosque of Sahlā:

> It is reported on the authority of either Abū Jaᶜfar (al-Bāqir) or Abū ᶜAbd Allāh (al-Sādiq) that he was once asked what other sanctuary besides that of God (in Makkah) and that of the Prophet (in Madīnah) was holy. The Imām said, "Al-Kūfah, the virtuous and pure, wherein are located the graves of the prophets, apostles sent with revelation and without revelation, and the truthful legatees; there is also the mosque of Sahlā in it where all the prophets sent by God have prayed. It will be from there that the justice of God will appear and there will be His Qā'im and the Qā'ims after him; it is the stopping place of the prophets and the righteous legatees."[97]

The tradition in al-Mufīd's al-Irshād was not in circulation among the Shīᶜites of the epoch during which Ibn Qawlawayh compiled his Kāmil.

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The dilemma of the early Shī'ite theologians

All this leads one to the conclusion that the idea of a future restorer was definitely known by the early Imāmites. After the prolonged disappearance of the twelfth Imām the two ideas -- the concept of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām and the idea of the future restorer of justice, al-Mahdī -- probably merged in the idea that the twelfth Imām was the only true Mahdī, promised in the traditions of the Prophet. When this idea was promulgated, the Imām who was just al-Qā'im and Ṣāḥib al-Amr became the messianic Mahdī who will appear before the End of Time. The title of al-Mahdī, it should be remembered, was not new among the Shī'ites, who had adhered to different individuals claiming this same title in the past. The reason for the propounding of such claims for their twelfth Imām by the Imāmite theologians was obvious, since the prolongation of the ghaybah had shaken the belief of many followers in their Imām. Ibn Bābūyah, who wrote a book on the twelfth Imām, entitled Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah (The perfection of the Religion and the completion of the Blessing) explains the reason for his undertaking, in the introduction of this book:

> That which moved me to write this book is that when I finished performing the ziyārah of my master Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā, I returned to Nishābūr where I stayed for sometime. During this sojourn I found many of the Shī'ites who used to come and visit me were baffled about

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> the ghaybah /of the twelfth Imām/ and were in doubt about the Qā'im and had gone astray. So I made every effort to inform them about the truth and to bring them back to the right path, by quoting the authentic reports on this subject on the authority of the Prophet and the infallible Imāms.98

The above citation shows the critical situation in which the Imāmite theologians were placed. The question which was often asked of them was how could an Imām still be an Imām when his ghaybah had been prolonged to this extent? "If he was in ghaybah simply because he was afraid of being killed then were not his predecessors subject to similar threats?

> If it is asked, "Were not his /the twelfth Imām's/ predecessors under threat yet they were visible and their followers could visit them?" We (Ṭūsī) say to them, "His condition is quite different from that of his predecessors, because the rulers knew that none of them would rise against them with the sword and destroy their rule. On the contrary, they (the rulers) knew /by their attitude of reticence/ that they were awaiting a Mahdī among them. Therefore, the belief in their Imāmate by those who held this belief could neither harm the Sulṭān nor their domains. So they had nothing to be afraid of from that direction. But this is not the case with Ṣāḥib al-Zamān (the Master of the Age) because it is well known that he will rise with the sword and will take charge of all the lands and will defeat all the rulers and will spread justice and remove wickedness." Secondly, the predecessors of the twelfth Imām knew who would succeed them, while the situation is different with the Ṣāḥib al-Zamān, because it is known that there is no one who can take his place before he arises

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> with the sword; it is, therefore, incumbent that he should be ghā'ib.[99]

In several other early sources one finds that the Imāmites were often reminded that the belief in the Imāmate of al-Qā'im was even more important than his advent as a Mahdī. The Imāmites, it seems, were getting impatient at the delay in the qiyām (rising) of the Imām, so the theologians related a tradition to them on the authority of the sixth Imām:

> Acknowledge your Imām, because when you have acknowledged him it will not harm you whether the matter (amr) appears sooner or later. And then /be it known to you/ that the one who acknowledges his Imām and dies before the rising of the Sāhib al-Amr (Master of the Command) will have the status of the one who will be fighting in the army of the Imām, under his banner.[100]

Hence, by applying the concept of Mahdiism to the twelfth Imām, it appears, the belief in the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām was being vindicated against objections raised, not only by other groups in Islamic society, but also by the Shī^{c}ites themselves. The question of the ghaybah will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, but here it will be sufficient to recall that, up to this time, the concept of the Mahdiism of the dead Imām had been a commonplace among different groups of the Shī^{c}ites such as the Kaysāniyyah, who upheld the Mahdiism of Muḥammad al-Ḥanafiyyah[101] (d. 81/700), or the Bāqiriyyah, who believed

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that the fifth Imām al-Bāqir (d. 113/731-2) was the Mahdī;[102] or, the Nawūsiyyah, who upheld the Mahdiism of the Sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765); or, the Mūsawiyyah, who maintained that the seventh Imām, Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799) was the Mahdī.[104] But this was the first time that the Shīᶜites asserted the Mahdiism of a living Imām, the twelfth Imām; and to support this doctrine various other characteristics of such a Mahdī were elaborated and synthesized with it. This was the doctrine which became a peculiarly Shīᶜite belief, having nothing in common with the Sunnite idea of the Mahdī, with the exception of the common belief in his future coming before the End of Time.

Before proceeding to examine these elaborations in the Imāmite dogmatics concerning the future coming of the twelfth Imām it will be worthwhile to discuss one more early source here which might throw more light on the usage of the title Mahdī in the early Imāmite works. This is the book of Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī al-ᶜĀmirī (d. 90/708-9).

Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī

Ibn Nadīm in his al-Fihrist, has a special section on the Shīᶜite jurists with the name of the books which they composed. The first person to head this section is Sulaym, who according to him, was among the companions of

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the Amīr al-Mu'minīn,[105] and according to the Imāmite sources the companion of the Imāms, ᶜAlī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and ᶜAli b. al-Ḥusayn.[106] Perhaps Ibn Nadīm refers to ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn as Amīr al-Mu'minīn and not ᶜAlī, who alone bears this title in the Shīᶜite writings. ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn lived at the time when al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Irāq (694-714) was trying to crush the Shīᶜite opposition to the Umayyad caliphate, to which Ibn Nadīm makes reference in regard to Sulaym, who as a fugitive from al-Ḥajjaj, took refuge with Abān b. Abū ᶜAyyāsh. Abān was another close companion of the fourth Imām who gave shelter to Sulaym.

> When death drew near to him he said to Abān, "I am indebted to you and now death is present with me. Oh, son of my brother, by order of the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and give him peace, it is thus (as described in my book)." Then he gave him a book which was well-known book of Sulaym the b. Qāys al-Hilālī, from which Abān b. Abī ᶜAyyāsh quoted, but which was not quoted by anyone else.[107]

No other source mentions the book which was the first book to appear about the Shīᶜah. Ṭūsī mentions a tradition on the authority of the fifth Imām about the last will and testament of ᶜAlī b. Abū Ṭālib which was recorded in the Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī and which was handed down to Abān who had heard it read to him by Sulaym. Abān said that he read it to ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn who affirmed that Sulaym had told the truth.[108]

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There are some strange traditions mentioned by Abān b. Abū ᶜAyyāsh on the authority of Sulaym b. Qays. These hadīths, in the early days of Imāmite history, added to the problems already existing concerning the Imāmate after al-ᶜAskarī. One such tradition is recorded by Masᶜūdī in his al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf. In explaining the term al-Qittᶜiyyah he says, "These are the ones who have affirmed the Imāmate of the twelve Imāms, and this restriction of the number of Imāms to twelve is in accordance with what Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī has mentioned in his book, which has been reported by Abān b. Abū ᶜAyyāsh, that the Prophet, peace be on him, told the Amīr al-Mu'minīn ᶜAlī b. Abū Tālib, "You and your twelve descendants are the rightful Imāms." Masᶜūdī adds, "And no one else besides Sulaym b. Qays has reported this tradition."[109] This tradition makes the number of the Imāms thirteen; as we have seen above, some fractions did maintain that there were thirteen Imāms.

That Sulaym left a book with Abān seems not to be open to doubt, because even Masᶜūdī in the above account refers to it, although Tūsī says nothing about it in his Fihrist. Be that as it may, we have today a book in hand entitled Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī al-ᶜĀmirī.[110] In all probability some traditions mentioned there are of later origin but I have strong reason to believe that parts of

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of the book may be dated quite early.

First, in the whole work there is only one reference to ʿiṣmah -- the infallibility of the Imāms, which as we shall see in the next chapter was a later development in Imāmite doctrine. Here too ʿiṣmah[111] is not discussed as a requirment of the Imāmate, as was maintained in the later theological texts, but as a peculiar mark of the Imāms to distinguish them from other people. Secondly, the book continually uses the titles hudāt al-muhtadūn (rightly guided leaders) for the Imāms instead of mahdiyyūn, which was a title of later origin used for all the Imāms. The singular, muhtadin is used in the Qur'ān for those persons who have accepted the right guidance and Sulaym's book uses this title, with the same implication, in several places.[112] This shows that some parts of the book are quite early, although, as pointed out above, some parts belong definitely to the later period.

Professor Wāʿizzādah of Ferdowsi University in Mashhad, an authority on Imāmite ḥadīth literature, believes that the whole book is a fabrication of the third/ninth century and most likely by a ghālī (extremist) Shīʿah who named the book Kitāb Sulaym in order to make use of the prestige of Sulaym's name. This speculation is apologetic in nature; it implies that such extremist ideas could not

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have been held by the Imāmites, although it is a fact that even among the Imāmites during the time of the sixth Imām (if we take the word Imāmite to include all those Shī^{c}ites who maintained that the Imāmate was incumbent, as were ^{c}iṣmah and naṣṣ (designation))[113] there were a number of close associates of the Imāms who held extravagant ideas about the Imāmate. The best example is Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, a close associate of the Imāms al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq, who was rejected by the latter because he had made a number of extravagant claims for the Imām.[114] Even some of the highly esteemed sources like al-Kulaynī's al-Kāfī are not devoid of such extravagant traditions. Sulaym's book, therefore, cannot be altogether discarded as a 'fabrication' of the later period.

We will now proceed to examine some of the characteristics which were systematized in the Imāmite dogmatics about the doctrine of al-Mahdī.

The miraculous birth of the Imāmite Mahdī

In general, the birth of an Imām holds a special significance in Shī^{c}ite hagiography because none of the historical sources have what the pious Imāmite literature has preserved for us, and if the historical works like that of al-Mufīd ever begin to describe the supernatural events

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surrounding the birth of an Imām, those passages are rendered hagiographical and loose their historicity. In the biographies of the Imāms written by the Shīᶜites themselves, it is hard to draw a line between these two types of works because the accounts are usually dominated by stories similar to those found in the Ṣūfī accounts of their saints. This digression was necessary because, in studying the lives of the Shīᶜite Imāms, especially that of the twelfth Imām, we are relying on sources which can neither be characterized as completely historical nor completely hagiographical.

The importance given to the birth of the Imāms may be clearly discerned in the many traditions recounting the manner of their creation and their essential substance. Unlike other men, the Imāms were shaped not of the dust of the earth, but first created as forms of light singing the praises of God long before the material world came into being. In a long tradition the Prophet, addressing his daughter Fāṭimah is reported to have said:

> Oh daughter, God, praised and exalted be He, cast a glance on the inhabitants of the earth and chose your father and made him a prophet. He cast a second glance and chose your husband, ᶜAlī, and made a brother and legatee (waṣī) for me. He cast a third glance and chose you and your mother and made you two mistresses of the women of the worlds. He cast then a fourth glance and chose your two sons and made them the two masters of the youths of paradise...[115]

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In creating the Imāms, then, God, so-to-speak, turned His face towards the world, and His glance generated the Ahl al-Bayt, who are regarded as the true source of divine mercy. Thus we are told,

> On the night in which the Imām is born, no other child is born but a believer (mu'min), and if polytheism (shirk) is born on earth /ōn that night/ God the exalted, transforms it into belief (īmān) in honour of the newly born Imām.[116]

The birth of the twelfth Imām who is the Mahdī, and who has been declared as the most excellent (afḍal)[117] of all the Imāms is even more significant and as miraculous as the birth of Moses and Jesus.[118]

The story of the birth of the twelfth Imām is told in full detail by Ibn Bābūyah[119] and Ṭūsī,[120] but, as one would expect, al-Mufīd avoids the account of the miraculous birth of the twelfth Imām in his graphic work on the biographies of the Imāms, al-Irshād. It may plausibly be suggested that he may have discarded the whole thing as a legend.

The most notable point in this story of the nativity of the Imāmite Mahdī concerns the mother of the Imām. According to the tradition, she was a slave girl by the name of Narjis, from Byzantium.[121] Here again, al-Mufīd does not speak about her being a slave girl or from

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Byzantium.[122] Another Shī^{c}ī writer, probably his contemporary, Shaykh Ḥusayn b. ^{c}Abd al-Wahhāb, accepts that she was a slave girl, and adds that he had seen many authentic reports that Narjis was a slave girl belonging to Ḥakīmah, daughter of Muḥammad al-Jawād, the ninth Imām, the paternal aunt of the eleventh Imām al-^{c}Askarī, in whose house she was born and brought up; one day, ^{c}Alī al-Hādī, the tenth Imām, saw her and declared that to her would be born the one peculiarly graced by God.[123]

The stress laid on her being not only from Byzantium but also a Christian -- the daughter of Yusha^{c} b. Qaysar, the emperor of Rūm, her mother being the daughter of the apostle of Jesus, Sham^{c}ūn (Simon)[124] -- is the outcome, it seems, of the belief in the second coming of Jesus which merges with the doctrine of the Mahdī.[125] By this establishment of relationship between a Christian slave girl, who is converted to Islam by the guidance of Fāṭimah the daughter of the Prophet and Maryam (Mary), the mother of Jesus,[126] and the Shī^{c}ī Imām, the Imāmite theologians may have been shrewdly furthering the eschatological importance of this Mahdī, the only true one, according to them, who will be assisted by Jesus in restoring the purity of Islam.[127]

The other point in this account which draws our attention is the frequent comparison between the birth of

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the Imāmite Mahdī and the birth of Moses, and the similarity of the circumstances which both Narjis and the mother of Moses had to face. The Imāmites report that both Moses and the Mahdī were in fear of being killed by the rulers of their time -- because the rulers were aware that the emergence of these two would bring an end to their rule. As a result, God, who has the foreknowledge of events to come, made special provision in the case of their mothers, that neither, although having conceived the child, had any visible signsgns of conception up to the time when the child was born. The story of the birth of the twelver Mahdī is beautifully told in the Imāmite hagiography. The report varies a little in our sources but I have taken the earliest account, which is preserved by Ibn Bābūyah:

> It is reported on the authority of Ḥakīmah, the daughter of Muḥammad b. ᶜAli al-Riḍa[128] that she said:
>
> "In the year 255 /A.H./ on the fifteenth night of Shaᶜbān /29th July, 870/ Abū Muḥammad /the eleventh Imām/ sent for me with the message, 'O aunt, tonight is the fifteenth night of Shaᶜbān.[129] Break your fast at our place. Verily, God the Exalted, in the near future, will make his Ḥujjah manifest and he will be His Ḥujjah on earth and successor /to the Imāmate/.'" I was overjoyed to hear this tiding and, putting on my clothes, went out immediately until I came to Abū Muḥammad. He was sitting in his courtyard. I asked him who the mother of the child was. He said, "Narjis." I said, "May God make me a sacrifice for you, there is no sign of conception in her." The Imām said,

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"This is the reason why I have told you /only/." So I went in and greeting them I took my seat. Narjis came forward and removed my shoes and said, "O my lady and the lady of my family, how are you to-night?" I replied, "You are my lady and the lady of the family." She did not understand what I said and asked, "What are you saying, O aunt?" I said to her, "O my daughter, God the Exalted will give you a son to-night who will be the Master in this world and the next." She blushed with abashment. When I finished the evening prayers I broke fast and then laid down to sleep. At midnight I got up and offered prayers. I finished praying while she was asleep and I found nothing had happened to her. Then I sat down reading the supererogatory (mu^{c}qaba) prayers after which I lay down again. I woke up dismayed but she was still asleep. After a while she woke up, performed her prayers and went to sleep again. I began to doubt /what Abū Muḥammad had predicted/ and just then Abū Muḥammad called out from where he was sitting, "O aunt, do not be in a hurry. The moment is approaching (al-amr qad qariba)." So I sat down and recited the Sūrah of Sajdah and Yāsin.[130] It was during this time that she woke up alarmed and I rushed to her and said, "The name of God be on you (bismillah ^{c}alayki). Do you feel anything?" She said, "Yes, O aunt." "Gather yourself and procure peace in your heart," I said to her. At that time I was taken over by weakness, as was she. Then I woke up sensing the voice of my Master and when I raised the covering on her I saw him (peace be on him) in prostration and the parts of his body /which should touch the ground in this position/[131] were on the ground. I took him up to my bosom and saw him pure and clean.[132] Abū Muḥammad called out to me and said, "Bring my son to me, O aunt." So I took him to Abū Muḥammad. He took him by putting his hands under his back and buttocks and his feet resting on his chest. Then he put his tongue in his mouth and gently stroked his hands on his eyes, ears and joints. Then he said, "O my son, say something." The boy said, "I bear witness that there is no god but God; He is unique and

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> has no partner and Muḥammad is the prophet of God." He continued sending his greetings to ᶜAlī, the Amīr of the faithful and on the Imāms, one after another until he reached his father's name. Then he paused and forbore from saying it. Abū Muḥammad said, "O aunt, take him to his mother, so that he may greet her, and then bring him back to me." I took him to his mother. He greeted her and I took him back to the Imām and left him there. The Imām said, "O aunt, come to visit us on the seventh day."
>
> The next morning I went there and greeted Abū Muḥammad and raised the curtain to see my Master. But I did not see him. I asked /Abū Muḥammad/, "May God make me a sacrifice for you, what happened to my Master?" He said, "O aunt, I have entrusted him to the One to whom the mother of Moses had entrusted her son." I came back on the seventh day and greeted the Imām and took my seat. He said, "Bring my son to me." I brought my Master to him. He was wrapped in a piece of cloth and the Imām repeated what he had done the first day....[133]

The other frequent comparison is between the ability of the twelfth Imām, to speak while just a child, with that of Jesus, as reported in the Qur'ān (19:30); since both being the Ḥujjah of God, they spoke with the authority of a grown man. A tradition is recounted that a very close companion of the eleventh Imām, al-ᶜAskarī, by the name of Aḥmad b. Isḥāq asked the Imām, after the birth of the twelfth Imām, how /could/he/ be assured that the child was the Imām after him or as he puts it, "what was the sign to set his mind at peace." At that, the boy began to utter, "I am Baqiyyat Allāh (the Last one from God) on earth and His

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avenger against His enemies."[134] So just as Jesus was to perform signs, proving through miracles his prophetic mission, the Mahdī of the Imāmites also gave the proof of his Imāmate in the same manner. Both being the Ḥujjah, the Imāmites contend, were endowed with similar powers of performing miracles. As pointed out above, al-Mufīd, who deserves to be studied as a historian of the Imāmites, does not include the section on the nativity cited above from Ibn Bābūyah, the Imāmite traditionist.

The Imāmite Mahdī comes to perform the Ḥajj every year

This is another feature of the Imāmite Mahdī. Makkah is not only the place where his qiyām will commence at the End of Time, but also as many Shīᶜites consider, his residence. A rare tradition narrates that the Ṣāḥib al-Zamān has a special home named Bayt al-Ḥamd (the House of Laudation), in which a brilliant lamp burning since his birth until has been the day he will rise with the sword.[135] Another tradition makes his home somewhere in the mountains between Makkah and Ṭā'if.[136] Wherever his home may be, the Shīᶜites assert that, he comes for the pilgrimage to Makkah every year. Ṭūsī relates a tradition on the authority of ᶜAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Azadī, who said that,

I was performing the ṭawāf (circumambulation) of

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> the Kaᶜbah when I saw a young man with a bright countenance surrounded by a group of people. The young man was speaking eloquently to them. I asked a person standing there, "Who is he?" The man said, "The son of the Apostle of God[137] who appears (yaẓhar) one day in a year for his special followers to converse with them and they with him."[138]

The Imāmite sources on the twelfth Imām are full of such traditions which emphasize one thing, that every year the Ḥajj is being attended by the one closely related to the Prophet who is also the promised-one to appear in the future. Most of these traditions have a uniform ending, that is, the narrative ends with the young man (the Imām) asking the person (in most cases the transmitter of the tradition) if he recognized the one to whom he was speaking. The person would reply in the negative and would continue with a declaration:

> I am the Qā'im of the Age; I am the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity. Indeed, the earth is not void of the Ḥujjah, nor can people remain in an interval of time without him.

The significance of Makkah as the most revered sanctuary of the Muslim world is clear and its choice as the place of his residence or regular visit, particularly during the Ḥajj season is discernible, especially when his re-emergence as the Mahdī also would commence from Makkah,

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as the account runs:

> Thus it is from the traditions reported by our Imāms that al-Ḥujjat al-Ghā'ib is in Makkah, and will rise from there when he reappers.[139]

We saw above the traditions recounting the twelfth Imām's appearance on the day of ᶜAshūrā and one would have expected the place of his residence or reappearance to be either Kūfah or Karbalā'; places which are mentioned by some traditions, I assume, of very late origin. But that would have limited the role of the Mahdī as the ᶜAlīd Qā'im only, while the emphasis on Makkah appears to have had a wider implication, particularly when one notes the usual insistence in the Imāmite writings that the only true Mahdī, who will appear before the Day of Judgement, as promised by the Prophet, can be no one else, but "the descendant of al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAli."[140] Most probably, excluding the other sons of ᶜAlī and confining Mahdiism to the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, the son of Fāṭimah only, was the way to prove the claim to the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām, although many other descendants of al-Ḥusayn were proclaimed Mahdīs by different Shīᶜite groups during the period between Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah (the first official Mahdī) and the twelfth Imām. The Imāmites maintained that since al-Ḥusayn

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had suffered at the hands of the ummah, God rewarded him by selecting his descendant as the Sulṭān who would be the Ḥujjah for the people[141] -- the whole ummah and not just the Shīᶜites. This seems to be the explanation of the stress laid by the Imāmites on Makkah as the place of residence and appearance of the Imām, where paradoxically, the Imām, according to some traditions, will call on the non-Shīᶜites to pay allegiance (bayᶜah) to him, between the Rukn and Maqām.[142] According to another tradition, a person who had met the twelfth Imām in Makkah asked him about the time when he would appear. The Imām replied,

> The sign of my appearance will be total turmoil and chaos in the world. At that time I will come to Makkah and will be in the Masjid al-Ḥarām (the Kaᶜbah), when the people will be saying, "Appoint an Imām for us." There will arise a lot of discussion on this point until a person will get up among this group and will look at me, and then will say, "O people, this is the Mahdī, look at him." and they will take my hand and place it between the Rukn and Maqām and will pay allegiance to me when on the point of despair.[143]

If we bear in mind that the period of the development of this doctrine in Shīᶜism coincides with the development of scholastic theology (kalām) and frequent discussions between the Sunnite and Shīᶜite groups, it is simple to explain the persistent desire of the Imāmites, not only to prove that they were the only group in the ummah who had

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an infallible Imām but also that he was the one who would reappear as the Mahdī of the ummah, to establish justice and equity and the purity of Islam[144] after the long ghaybah, so unusual for a living Imām.

I have discussed above a few of the features of the Imāmite Mahdī which are of the greatest importance in establishing his position as the only Mahdī, to be expected at the End of Time. The other important peculiarity of the Imāmite Mahdī is his ghaybah (occultation) which will be discussed in the next chapter. This will deal with the traditionist and theological approach to the whole subject by various prominent Imāmite theologians of the early period.

Conclusion

The primary sources, including some which are given attention for the first time, like the genre of ziyārāt literature, have been examined in order to trace the doctrinal evolution and systematization, in Imāmite dogmatics, of the Imāmate and Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām. In doing so, I have concentrated on the Imāmite position, contrasting it with that of other fractions which sub-divided on the same question of al-ʿAskarī's successor in 260/873-74. I believe I have been able to produce evidence to support my contention that the Imāmite position on the question of

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Mahdiism was not formulated in those early years, and that most plausibly, the idea of the Mahdiism of the twelfth Imām was evolved because of the prolonged disappearance of the Imām. This was the way, it seems, by which the Imāmite theologians had chosen to vindicate the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām. In view of the fact that the idea of the Mahdī was already known in Muslim circles, and that a number of individuals belonging to the Ahl al-Bayt had already claimed this title, it does not seem far-fetched to suggest that the Imāmite theologians might have combined the idea of an Imām from the direct descendants of the Prophet, and the belief in the future coming of a restorer of the faith belonging also to the Ahl al-Bayt, i.e. the Mahdī.

In my discussion on the ghaybah of the Imāmite Mahdī I will bring forward further evidence in support of this tentative conclusion. This evidence will show how the early Imāmite traditionist approach, relying greatly on the traditions and texts of the ḥadīth literature, changed into a highly technical and scholastic theology which included topics like the ʿiṣmah -- infallibility of the Imām; the luṭf -- the special grace of God; the taklīf -- the imposition of the task of following religious injunctions as shown by the Imām; and so on, in order to prove that the twelfth

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Imām was the only rightful person to claim not only the Imāmate and function of the Ḥujjah of God, but also the position of the Mahdī -- the future restorer of justice and equity.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE DOCTRINE OF THE GHAYBAH

Introduction

In studying the evolution of the doctrine of the ghaybah it has been found expedient to trace the trends evident in the early Imāmite sources in respect to the doctrinal systematization of the ghaybah as represented on the one hand by the traditionists (muḥaddithūn) and on the other by the theologians (mutakallimūn). Although these two trends are not well-defined in the sources, it appears that the early Imāmite jurists before al-Mufīd (336-414/949-1023) depended greatly on the prophetic traditions and the interpretation (ta'wīl) of the Qur'ānic verses related on the authority of the Imāms, in particular the Ṣādiqayn (two Ṣādiqs), the fifth (d. 113/731-32) and the sixth (d. 148/765-66) Imāms, in order to vindicate the Imāmate of the twelfth Hidden Imām. This does not mean that the Imāmites before this period paid no attention to the art of kalām as such, because according to al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940-41), the Shī'ī kalām was much developed during the lifetime of

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the two Ṣādiqs and used in theological controversies by some of their prominent disciples like Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.[1] There is a difference, however, between the period of the two Ṣādiqs and the later period relevant to this thesis. In the former, the sixth Imām is reported to have cautioned his disciples not to be carried away by kalām, but to pay more attention to what the Imām says.[2] In the latter, the Imāmite jurists of the period, according to Ibn Bābūyah, were not free to express their belief concerning the twelfth Imām, and could neither profess their faith without employing taqiyyah nor could they defend it openly, in which case it would have been necessary to make use of the more profound tools of kalām. On the other hand, the doctrine of the ghaybah could not have been formulated and linked with the central doctrine of the Imāmate at that early stage, when, as seen in the preceding discussion, the ghaybah must have been taken as a temporary phenomenon at the most. Among the Imāmite jurists who may be taken as representative of this traditionist approach to the problem of the ghaybah are al-Nuᶜmānī (fl. 3rd/10th) the author of Kitāb al-Ghaybah, and Ibn Bābūyah (d. 381/991-992) whose Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niᶜmah remains the comprehensive work on the subject of the twelfth Imām and his ghaybah.

Beginning with al-Mufīd, and perhaps even earlier,

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the Imāmite theologians deemed it important to employ kalām methods in vindicating the Imāmate of the Hidden Ḥujjah. The sources show that the doctrine of the Hidden Ḥujjah was under severe attack from both the non-Imāmite groups and the Sunnites, mainly, it seems, because of the prolonged ghaybah of the Imām which, to quote Ibn Bābūyah, "had thrown the beliefs of the Shi'ites into confusion."[3] This period was a decisive one in the history of the Imāmite religion because it forced great changes in the approach of its doctors. The period marked the end of al-Ghaybat al-Qaṣīrah (the Short Occultation) to use Ṭūsī's terminology, and the beginning of al-Ghaybat al-Tāmmah (the Complete Occultation). The leadership of the Imāmites rested with the agents (wukalā') of the twelfth Imām who, as the Imāmites asserted, were appointed by the eleventh and twelfth Imāms. The end of the period of these wukalā' in the year 329/940-41 was interpreted as the commencement of the Complete Occultation, and the beginning of the institution of ijtihād for the Imāmite jurists.[4] Not only did the Imāmite fiqh find its full development during these years, but theological aspects of the creed also received close attention from scholars like al-Mufīd and his erudite student al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044-45), who both are believed to have

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attended the lectures of the Muᶜtazilite, al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī (d. 415/1024-25).[5] Al-Mufīd's correction of Ibn Bābūyah's Creed is the classic example of the transition in the approach of the Imāmite scholars of this period.[6] Ibn al-Nadīm, the contemporary of al-Mufīd, remembers the latter as one of the greatest mutakallimūn of the Imāmites with whom "culminates leadership among his associates of the Imāmiyah (sect) of the Shiᶜah in Law, theology...."[7] The various titles of his works cited by his two other students al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058-59) and Ṭūsī indicate the difference of taste between him and his predecessor, Ibn Bābūyah.[8]

Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā composed one of the chief works on the Imāmate entitled al-Shāfī fī al-Imāmah in reply to the refutation of the Imāmite stand on the question of the necessity of the Imāmate, discussed in the sections dealing with al-Imāmah in al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-ᶜAdl[9] by ᶜAbd al-Jabbār. The work is purely kalām, and in the course of justifying the doctrine of the Imāmate the ghaybah is also vindicated.

The use of kalām and the open vindication of the Imāmate of the Hidden Ḥujjah was to some extent the result of the favourable relationship of the Imāmite theologians

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like al-Mufīd and al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā with the ᶜAbbāsid caliphs and the Buyid amīrs.[10] The Buyids had, at least politically, preferred the Imāmite Shīᶜīsm, in particular, that part of the doctrinal structure of the ghaybah which accepted the rule of the 'oppressor' (the caliph, according to the Imāmites), without making the twelfth Imām responsible for his removal and without requiring the ummah to pay allegiance to him as an Imām until his reappearance. Ibn Bābūyah reports that ᶜAlī al-Riḍā (d. 202/817-818) said once,

> I see the Shīᶜites /in future/ who will become like cattle looking for pasture and will not find one. /This will occur/ when the third among my descendants (i.e. al-ᶜAskarī) will have died. Somebody asked the Imām, "Why, O son of the Prophet?" He replied, "So that when he rises with the sword he will not be responsible for the allegiance paid by anybody to him (lit. he will have nobody's bayᶜah on his neck)."[11]

This is interpreted to mean that during the ghaybah there will be no obligations on the ummah to bind it to him who will be the theocratic ruler in future, when God commands him to appear. This appears to be a prudent accommodation of the Imāmite theologians of this period with rulers like the Būyids who, having professed the Imāmite Shīᶜīsm, were bound to the obedience of the Imāms, but because the twelfth Imām, the Master of the Age, was in ghaybah and this particular clause existed in this doctrine, they could

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continue to be the Imāmites and still let the caliph be selected from the ᶜAbbāsids and not the ᶜAlīds.

The situation as it actually appeared to the Būyid ruler Muᶜizz al-Dawlah (334-356/945-967) after his occupation of Baghdād in 945 was as follows: Ibn al-Athīr relates that Muᶜizz al-Dawlah consulted some of his close courtiers on the question of excluding the ᶜAbbāsids from the Caliphate and giving allegiance to one of the members of the ᶜAlīds.

> All of them advised him to do so except one, who said, "This is not a wise thing to do. Today you have alongside you a Caliph whom neither you nor your followers believe to be the rightful Caliph, and if you were to command them to kill him they would do so .... When you install one of the ᶜAlīds as Caliph, there will be alongside you one whose Caliphate would be held to be lawfully established by you and by your followers, and if he were to order them to kill you they would do so. So give up the idea."[12]

This report is most probably of later origin or even the reflection of Ibn al-Athīr's own analysis. It reflects the important fact that there were advantages for the Būyids in continuing to adhere to the Imāmite form of Shīᶜīsm, according to which the Imām was in ghaybah, rather than to the Zaydī form of Shīᶜīsm, to which they must have belonged at the beginning of their career and which accepted the Imāmate of only that ᶜAlīd who openly fought for it.

This account helps one to comprehend the circumstances which may have played some part in the doctrinal development of the ghaybah. It is, nevertheless, difficult

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to determine precisely under which Imāmite theologians the doctrine in question found its complete systematization. Both the muḥaddithūn and the mutakallimūn have vindicated the Imāmite position, but it is actually Ṭūsī whose endeavours in the systematization and vindication of this particular doctrine have proved to be most fruitful. The main characteristic of his approach to this problem is the blending of the traditionist and theological defence of the ghaybah. This method is so typical of Ṭūsī that Majlisī thought it to be inconsistent with his own approach, which is overlaid by the traditionist one. He says,

> Some of the points raised by the Shaykh (Ṭūsī) in his /Kitāb al-/ Ghaybah need further elucidation which is beyond the scope of our work. We have quoted the Shaykh at length because there are points /in his exposition/ which dwell on the principles (uṣul) of our belief, which ought to have been discussed in works dealing with kalām.[13]

Ṭūsī composed his work at a time when the Imāmites were once again in disfavour with the ᶜAbbāsids. The shortcomings of the previous works, it appears, must have been discerned by al-Mufīd, who urged Ṭūsī to compose a book on "the ghaybah of Ṣāḥib al-Zamān, the reason for his ghaybah, the cause for which his ghaybah is prolonged and his concealment has continued, even though he is very much needed since wickedness is spreading....."[14] Hence Ṭūsī undertook to

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vindicate the doctrine on both traditional and theological lines. He subjected the existing sources to such thorough study that no Imāmite scholar after him has been able to add anything new to the subject of ghaybah. What Majlisī has done is to collect together the existing views on ghaybah in Volume Thirteen of his Biḥār al-Anwār. His contribution is a new interpretation of what he terms the wāḥid (rare) traditions, which by his time could no longer be held as authentic. Some of these interpretations of Majlisī were mentioned in the preceding chapter.

In view of this, the discussion on the ghaybah will be divided into two sections as follows:

Part I: The Traditionist view of the ghaybah

Part II: The Theological view of the ghaybah

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PART I

The Traditionist view of the ghaybah

The early Imāmite sources assert that the twelfth Imām went into occultation from the year 260/873-74, the year his father al-ᶜAskarī died.[15] But Ṭūsī[16] and before him al-Mufīd[17] hold a different opinion, namely, that the Occultation began from the early days of al-Qā'im's birth, either the third or seventh day, as the report goes. Ṭūsī reports that when Ḥakīmah, the aunt of al-ᶜAskarī, came to see the child on the third day the Imām told her,

> The child is under the protection of God, and in His custody; He has concealed him (satarahu) and hidden him (ghayyabahu) until He permits him /to reappear/. So when God hides my face and takes me away and when you find my followers (shīᶜatī) in dispute /about him/ then inform those reliable among them of /what you have witnessed/. But keep this to yourself and they too should keep the matter secret. Indeed God will hide His walī from the people and conceal him from His slaves and no one shall see him until Gabriel brings forward his horse for him /to rise and ride/, "for God will enact a matter which is destined to take place".[18]

This account or the one which reports that Ḥakīmah came on the seventh day, according to Ṭūsī,[19] indicates that al-Qā'im went into occultation much before 260/873-74.

The earliest interpretation of the Short Occultation in the Imāmite sources appears in al-Nuᶜmānī's Kitāb al-Ghaybah. Earlier than al-Nuᶜmānī, one would have expected

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al-Kulaynī to throw light on the two occultations; but his al-Kāfī is silent on this matter. It appears that al-Nuᶜmānī's interpretation became the official explanation of the later Imāmite writers because no change is found in this definition throughout Imāmite history. Al-Nuᶜmānī says:

> The occultation (ghaybah) does not mean non-existence (ᶜadam). Sometimes a person goes into occultation from a city where he is well-known and whose inhabitants were used to seeing him; /at the same time/ he is in occultation in respect to some other city /where he is not known or seen/. Sometimes a person is in occultation from one community while he is present for other, or, he is hiding from his enemies and not from his friends, but still he is said to be in occultation and in concealment. In this case, by 'occultation' is meant 'occultation' from his enemies and those unreliable friends who cannot be trusted with his secret. As a result, his situation is unlike that of his predecessors who used to live openly among both friends and enemies. In spite of this /occultation/ his friends report his existence and convey his commands and interdictions to us. Such reports by these /friends/ are reliable and proof /of his existence/ for those who are trying to find excuses.[20]

The above-mentioned report offers an interpretation of much later origin when it appears that the period of the ghaybah had extended beyond the expectation of the Imāmites. Perhaps, it is in this prolongation of the ghaybah that the reason for expounding the two forms of ghaybah for the Imām must be sought.

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The two Forms of the ghaybah of the Twelfth Imām

The two forms of the ghaybah are based on the traditions, undoubtedly of later origin. Al-Kulaynī's section on the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām has several traditions of which the majority report only one form of the ghaybah for the Imām before he rises with the sword. Zurārah reports:

> I heard Abū ᶜAbd Allāh (the sixth Imām) say, "There will be occultation for that child before he rises."

The same report goes on to give reason for the child's the occultation, which is, "He is afraid," and the Imām pointed to his stomach "meaning afraid of being killed." The Imām then continues to recount the condition of the Shīᶜites to Zurārah which resembles al-Nawbakhtī's exposition of the Imāmite fractions after al-ᶜAskarī's death. For instance, the Imām says,

> O Zurārah, he is the one who should be awaited. He is the one regarding whose birth people will dispute. Some will say his father died without leaving a successor; others will say he was still in his mother's womb when his father died; still others will hold that he was born two years after his father's death. God is pleased to subject the Shīᶜites to test, and it is here, O Zurārah, that the liars will fall into doubt.[22]

This tradition is almost certainly fabricated, because the period of its circulation may be placed during the first part of the occultation of the Imām when al-Nawbakhtī composed his Firaq al-Shīᶜah, as the contents

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indicate. What is relevant for this thesis is the mention of one form of ghaybah before the qiyām (rising). Those traditions which mention two forms of ghaybah imply quite a different meaning of the two occultations than what was later interpreted as the Short and Complete Occultation. Al-Kulaynī mentions the following tradition about the two forms of ghaybah, reported on the authority of the sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq:

> For the Qā'im there are two forms of ghaybah; in one of them he will be present during the Ḥajj. He will see the people but they will not see him.[23]

The two occultations in this tradition do not state the length of time which depicts another fact, namely, that until the days of al-Kulaynī, who died at the end of the so-called Short Occultation (329/940-41), the two forms of ghaybah were not divided into Sughrā (Lesser) and Kubrā (Greater), as was the case much later. None of the early sources uses these two terms Sughrā and Kubrā for the two occultations. Al-Kulaynī in another tradition on this subject uses the terms Qaṣīrah (Short) and Ṭawīlah (Long) for the two occultations.

> The Qā'im will have two occultations; one will be short (qaṣīrah) and the other long (ṭawīlah). During the first occultation no one will know

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> his whereabouts except his special Shīᶜites; and during the second one, only his special slaves will know his place.[24]

The terms qaṣīrah and tawīlah in the above tradition do not connote the meaning of Ṣughrā and Kubrā which most probably originated in the writings of the Imāmites during the Ṣafavid period. The occultation was already considered as tawīlah when Ibn Bābūyah composed his Kamāl al-Dīn. In one place he writes,

> A man told me in Madīnat al-Salām (Baghdād) that the ghaybah had become prolonged and the confusion had become unbearable; and many of the followers had turned away from the Imāmate /of the twelfth Imām/ because of the long occultation.[25]

A study of the above-mentioned traditions reveals another important point in regard to the explanation of the two forms of ghaybah. According to the first of these traditions, in one of the occultations the Imām will not be seen by his followers. The ghaybah here is not specified in terms of 'short' or 'long'. In the second tradition, the first ghaybah is perhaps as it was later interpreted, the period of the agents of the Imām, and the second ghaybah is after the period of the Abwāb (the "gates", i.e. the agents, through whom the Imām could be contacted). In both cases the later elucidation of the occultations, which will be discussed below, is absent.

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It is plausible to maintain that the division of the ghaybah into 'Short' and 'Long' is the innovation of the Imāmite jurists. In support of this division, traditions were either invented or interpreted to accommodate the situation as it appeared to them. That the occultation was considered to be a temporary arrangement is evident from most of the sources of this period. For instance, al-Mufīd, stating the signs of the reappearance of al-Qā'im, writes:

> Many reports recounting the signs of the days when al-Qā'im the Mahdī will rise and the events accompanying his rising have come down to us, and we have used them /in writing this section/. Among these signs are the revolt of al-Sufyānī, the assassination of a sayyid from among the descendants of al-Ḥasan and the disagreement of the ᶜAbbāsids in the kingdom of this world....[26]

The last part of the prophecy regarding the decay of the ᶜAbbāsid Caliphate, which is found as early as Ibn Bābūyah, indicates how early the ghaybah was expected to end. Be that as it may, it is necessary to discover who represented the Hidden Imām during the Short Occultation and to find out the reason for the discontinuation for an indefinite period of this deputyship of the Imām.

The Short Occultation: al-Ghaybat al-Qaṣīrah

Al-Nuᶜmānī, the contemporary of Ibn Bābūyah, composed his Kitāb al-Ghaybah after the Short Occultation in 342/953-54.[27]

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In this book, after relating a number of traditions on the two forms of ghaybah, including the two above-mentioned traditions reported by his teacher al-Kulaynī, al-Nuᶜmānī makes a digression to explain the meaning of the Qaṣīrah occultation which, it appears, was, more or less, formulated during his time. This is the first work where one finds this elucidation of the Short Occultation, an elucidation which must have been accepted as it stands by later authorities. The absence of this interpretation of the Short Occultation in the earlier important compilation of al-Kulaynī, whose death occurred in the same year as that of the last agent of the twelfth Imām, ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samarrī (d. 329/940-41) is further evidence that the explanation offered by al-Nuᶜmānī is of later origin than the year 329/940-41. Al-Nuᶜmānī explained the Short Occultation as follows:

> As for the first ghaybah, it is that occultation in which there were the mediators (al-sufarā') between the Imām and the people, carrying out (qiyāmᵃⁿ) /the duties of the Imām/, having been designated /by him/, living among the people. These were the eminent persons and leaders from whose hands emanated cures derived from the knowledge and the recondite sagacity which they possessed, and the answers to all the questions which were put to them about the problems and difficulties /of religion/. This is the Short Occultation (al-Ghaybat al-Qaṣīrah), the days of which have come to an end and whose time has gone by.[28]

Among the eminent persons who served as mediators

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between the Imām and the people four hold a prominent position. In fact, later sources identify the Short Occultation with the period of these Four Agents, who as they claimed, were designated by the Imām. These Four Agents were:

1. ᶜUthmān b. Saᶜīd al-ᶜAmrī (260/874-75)
2. Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān al-ᶜAmrī (d. 304 or 305/916-917)
3. al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/937-38)
4. ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samarrī (d. 329/940-41)

The Four Agents and the ghaybah

In the early sources like al-Kāfī of al-Kulaynī, al-Nuᶜmānī's Ghaybah and Ibn Bābūyah's Kamāl al-Dīn, there is no separate section devoted to the Four Agents. In fact, the agents are not confined to four in any of these works. Ṭūsī mentions several wukalā' (agents) of the Imām in his Rijāl.[29] Ibn Bābūyah, in a long section of his book dealing with the persons who had seen the Qā'im mentions the name of the second agent, Muḥammad al-ᶜAmrī, three times[30] without qualifying him in any way as the special agent (al-nā'ib al-khāṣṣ) of the Imām. The first agent ᶜUthmān al-ᶜAmrī is mentioned as "al-Sammān (seller of cooking fat), the foremost of the Shīᶜah"[31] who was present at the time when Jaᶜfar, al-ᶜAskarī's brother wanted to perform funeral prayers over his brother's dead body, and was stopped by a boy who came

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out from behind /the curtain/ saying, "O uncle, I have more right to perform prayers over my father."[32]

In a section dealing with tawqīᶜāt (written and signed answers or notes) received from the twelfth Imām, Ibn Bābūyah mentions the last three agents who had received such notes from the Imām commanding them to designate their successors, but he does not mention the sequence of the three agents nor the fact that the sequence ended with al-Samarrī. In another place he relates an account which appears to show that, whether appointed by the Imām to do so or not, the second and the third agents used to receive the khums tax[33] due from the Shīᶜites on behalf of the Imām. The report states:

> It was related to us (Ibn Bābūyah) by Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī al-Aswad (who said), "I used to carry the goods (amwāl) which were the endowments /in the name of the Imām/ to Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān al-ᶜAmrī, God be pleased with him, who used to give me a receipt for them. One day, two or three years before he died, I brought some of the goods to him. He ordered me to hand them to Abū al-Qāsim al-Rūḥī /al-Nawbakhtī/. /I did so/ and asked for the receipt from him, for which he complained to Abū Jaᶜfar. So he (Abū Jaᶜfar) told me not to ask for receipts from him and added, 'Whatever reaches the hands of Abū al-Qāsim has reached me. So from now on take the goods to him and do not ask for receipts.'"[34]

This, Ibn Bābuyah concludes, could happen only by the command of God.[35]

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From the several reports in these early sources two points become evident. First, the deputyship of the Imām was not confined to the Four Agents in this period. The stress laid on the Four seems to be because of the influence which they exerted on the Imāmites of this period. Secondly, in all probability, the institution of the deputyship (niyābah) was a later explanation to solve the meaning of al-Ghaybat al-Qasīrah, as interpreted by al-Nuᶜmānī. It is in fact, al-Nuᶜmānī who for the first time elucidated the Short Occultation in the terms seen above. Al-Mufīd does not embark on the question of the two forms of ghaybah in his al-Irshād, and hence does not treat the subject of the Four Agents during this first ghaybah. But in some places he mentions "our companions characterized by the sifārah (mediatorship)"[36] when he recounts the story of a man who had come from Egypt to Makkah after al-ᶜAskarī's death and heard the dispute over the latter's succession. At still another place he mentions the sifārah of Hājiz b. Yazīd and the doubt people had as to whether he was appointed by the Imām or not. The doubt arose when a man by the name of al-Hasan b. ᶜAbd al-Hamīd wanted to pay to the agent of the Imām the khums tax which had accumulated with him. His doubt was removed by a note received from the Imām confirming

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the trustworthiness of Ḥājiz who acted on his behalf.[37] Another person by the name of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad,[38] we are told by al-Mufīd, "in those days was the safīr."[39] All this tends to establish the fact that besides the Four Agents there were many others who were known to hold the sifārah of the Imām and entrusted to collect the khums tax.

It is Ṭūsī who for the first time devotes a special section to these agents of the Imām, including the Four as "the praiseworthy agents" who, according to him, were appointed by the Imāms, eleventh and twelfth, themselves.

The First Agent, Abū ᶜAmr, ᶜUthmān b. Saᶜīd al-ᶜAmrī

Ṭūsī in his Rijāl mentions him as the close associate of the tenth (d. 254/868) and eleventh Imāms and their thoroughly reliable agent.[40] He began his career as the agent of the tenth Imām ᶜAlī al-Hādī at the early age of eleven.[41] Nothing is known about his date of birth or his death. He was appointed as the agent of the eleventh Imām al-ᶜAskarī around 256/869-70 after the death of al-Hādī in 254/868. A group of the Shīᶜites who had come from Qumm to visit al-Hādī asked him about the person whom they could consult and entrust with the taxes in his absence. The Imām said,

> Here is Abū ᶜAmr, the trustworthy. Whatever he says

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to you is from me and whatever he gives to you is from me.

The same group related that after al-Hādī's death, one day they came to see his son al-ᶜAskarī and asked him the same thing they had asked his father. The Imām pointed to Abū ᶜAmr and said,

He was the trusted person of the preceding Imām and remains the same during my life-time and after my death.[42]

The circumstances under which the first agent lived are well known. Abū ᶜAmr plied the trade of a seller of cooking fat and had consequently acquired the nickname of al-Sammān. This, as Ṭūsī reports, was the way to hide his true identity as the agent of the Imām.

The Shīᶜites used to bring their dues from the Imām to Abū ᶜAmr who used to hide them in the cooking fat containers and take them to al-ᶜAskarī under taqiyyah and apprehension.[43]

There is enough evidence to assume that the primary function of all the agents, including Abū ᶜAmr, was to handle the khums tax which was due to the Imāms from their followers. One day a group of Yamanite Shīᶜites came to visit al-ᶜAskarī in Sāmarrā. The Imām sent for Abū ᶜAmr who arrived within a short period. The Imām told him,

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> Go, O ᶜUthmān and collect from this group from Yaman that which they have brought, since you are the agent (wakīl) and the trusted person in the matter of the wealth of God.[44]

The Yamanites confirmed the agency of Abū ᶜAmr by repeating what the Imām said. Then the Imām added, "Yes, and bear witness that ᶜUthmān b. Saᶜid is my agent and his son Muḥammad is the agent of my son, your Mahdī."[45]

The funeral rites of the eleventh Imām were performed by Abū ᶜAmr[46] and this honour, says Ṭūsī, could not have been given to him except by the direct order of the Imām.[47] His office of the deputyship was confirmed by the twelfth Imām by sending him notes in reply to his questions "in the same handwriting which was seen during al-ᶜAskarī's time."[48] As pointed out above, nothing is known about his death, but his wikālah towards the twelfth Imām must have been of a short duration because most of the sources give more importance to his son Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad whose wikālah was confirmed with that of his father by al-ᶜAskarī.[49]

The Second Agent: Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān al-ᶜAmrī (d. 304 or 305/916 or 917)

He served as the agent of the twelfth Imām for as long as forty years, the longest among all the agents.

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According to Ṭūsī, he was confirmed in this position by both al-ᶜAskarī and the learned Imāmites including his father.[50] They had all recognized his reliability and that of his father. At one time his father was asked to take an oath to the effect that he had seen the twelfth Imām and he did so;[51] while Abū Jaᶜfar reported the well-known tradition, after taking an oath,

> The Ṣāhib al-Amr is present during the Ḥajj every year, and he sees the people and knows them although they fail to see him or know him,[52]

and that he (Abū Jaᶜfar) had seen him holding the drapes of the Kaᶜbah and praying, "O God, avenge me against my enemies."[53]

It was mainly due to the efforts of this agent, Ṭūsī reports, that the Imāmites were able to obtain necessary information about their Imām, and he was so highly esteemed even by the Imām that he was endowed with superhuman powers through the Imām. The questions which were put to him by the Sunnites were answered in writing by the Imām and the "hand-writing was similar to that seen during his father, ᶜUthmān's life-time."[54] Abū Jaᶜfar is reported to have written books on fiqh which he had studied (lit. heard) under the twelfth Imām and his father who had transmitted this knowledge from al-Hādī and al-ᶜAskarī.[55] Among these

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books was a work entitled Kitāb al-Ashribah (Book on Beverages) which, according to the report of his daughter Umm Kulthūm, was handed down to al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī and then to the fourth agent, al-Samarrī.[56]

In the preceding chapter reports concerning the prohibition against naming the Qā'im were examined. Here it is relevant to note, once again, what the second agent of the Imām is reported to have related to the Imāmites directly from the Imām, as he asserts, during the Ḥajj of that year, when he saw al-Qā'im praying near the Ka^{c}bah. The Imām commanded the agent to tell those who were asking his name that,

> Either they should keep quiet and go to Paradise or talk about it (i.e. the subject of his name) and accept the Fire; since, if they come to know the name of the Imām they will publicize it, and if they know his whereabouts they will lead the people there /and put his life in danger/.[57]

This could possibly mean that up to this time, when the ḥadīth was reported by Abū Ja^{c}far, the name of al-^{c}Askarī's successor had been kept secret by his agents.

The ascription to the special agents of the Imām of peculiar foreknowledge of events to come and other such attributes which were held to belong to the Imāms only, in all probability, began with Abū Ja^{c}far because he had acted as the agent of the Imām for a much longer period than did

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the other agents. Al-Nuᶜmānī made a reference to this in his description of these prominent figures who acted as mediators between the Shīᶜites and the Imām. He is reported to have had foreknowledge of the time when his death would occur. He had prepared for himself a tablet to be installed on his grave, and on it were engraved verses of the Qur'ān and the names of the Imāms.[58] He died in the year 304 or 305/917-18. According to Ṭūsī, he held the wikālah towards the Imām for some fifty years, which includes the period when his father Abū ᶜAmr ᶜUthmān was the agent too.[60]

The Third Agent: Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn b. Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/937-38)

Abū al-Qāsim was among the close associates of the second agent and had shared the responsibility of the Imāmite leadership by assisting him. The preceding two agents had led almost a life of political quietism, but Abū al-Qāsim was a well-known and highly respected personage at the ᶜAbbāsid court because he was held in high favour by the Shīᶜite vizier family of Āl Furāt.[61] He was appointed as the agent of the Imām by Abū Jaᶜfar who, as it appears from the source, did not mention anything about having been ordered by the Imām to do so. There is no evidence of this, at least, in the earlier days of this appointment. The documentary evidence which corroborates this is in Ṭūsī's

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account of Abū al-Qāsim.

A man by the name of Jaᶜfar b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī used to bring his khums tax to the second agent. Before handing over the tax he used to ask a question which, as he claimed, no one before him asked. The question was, "Does this money, which amounts to so much belong to the Imām?" The agent used to affirm that it did, whereupon al-Madā'inī would once again ask the same question and wait for the reply. It was only after this that he used to hand over the money to the agent. The last time he went to see him he had four hundred dīnars to give him. Abū Jaᶜfar directed him to give the amount to Abū al-Qāsim. Al-Madā'inī, the reporter, thought Abū Jaᶜfar must have been displeased with him and had therefore directed him to Abū al-Qāsim. So he returned to obtain confirmation of his statement. The agent grew angry and said,

> Get up. May God give you peace. I have appointed Abu al-Qāsim in my place and at present he holds my status /as the agent/. Al-Madā'inī asked, "Have you appointed him as your successor by the command of the Imām?" He replied, "Get up. May God give you peace. It is just as I have said."

Al-Madā'inī had no choice but to obey him.[62]

The above account brings out two facts, of which one, as pointed out previously, is that the agents were for the most part the treasurers of the Imām, collecting khums

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due on the followers of the Imām. Second, it was the Shīᶜites who expected the agents to be appointed by the Imām, whereas, for the agents it was prudent to designate a person acceptable to all the Imāmites. Many Shīᶜites were expecting another person by the name of Jaᶜfar b. Aḥmad b. Matyal, who too was one of the close associates and advisors of the second agent, to be appointed as an agent. The choice of Abū al-Qāsim was not only what the times required but also must have been influenced by another eminent member of the Nawbakhtī family, namely Abū Sahl Ismāᶜīl b. ᶜAlī (d. 310/922-23). He was one of those leading Imāmites who were present in the last days of the second agent to bear witness to the designation of Abū al-Qāsim as the agent. In fact, he was also considered as a possible candidate to succeed Abū Jaᶜfar. After Abū al-Qāsim's designation he was asked the reason for his not being appointed as the agent of the Imām rather than the former. He replied,

> The Imāms know better about the person who could be appointed for this place. I am a person who meets with the enemies of the Shīᶜah and discusses with them the doctrines. If I had known what Abū al-Qāsim knows about the Imām of the Age, perhaps in the course of my discussions, when I was slow in bringing forward strong reasons to prove my contentions (i.e. to vindicate the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām), I would have revealed the whereabouts of the Imām. But if Abū al-Qāsim, for instance, had the Imām hidden under his garments and even if he was being cut to pieces /for not revealing the secret/ he would still not reveal his presence to his enemies.[63]

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The second agent was asked by some prominent Imāmites about his successor and this is what he said,

> This al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ b. Abū Baḥr al-Nawbakhtī is my successor and the mediator between you and the Ṣāḥib al-Amr. He is the agent and thoroughly reliable. Hence, refer to him in all your affairs and in your important matters rely on him. I was commanded to announce this and I have done so.[64]

Later on, although the sources do not discuss it openly, in all probability it seems that some people must have had second thoughts about accepting Abū al-Qāsim as the agent. The reason was that there were quite a few other prominent persons among the Imāmites who were assisting the second agent in performing his task. Consequently, the relationship of Abū al-Qāsim with the second agent had to be shown to the people as being a very intimate one, in order to strengthen his leadership. Thus we have the report made by Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of the preceding agent, in which she relates how intimate Abū al-Qāsim was with her father; she says that for many years he looked after his property and conveyed his secret messages to the Imāmite leaders. So zealous was Abū al-Qāsim in the service of the agent that, she relates, he even told him what occurred between himself and his slave girls.[65]

That Abū al-Qāsim's choice was well-calculated and extremely prudent on the part of Abū Jaᶜfar, there seems to

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be little doubt, more particularly when seen in the light of those formative years of the Imāmite creed during the Short Occultation. Abū al-Qāsim was especially known for his shrewdness, and even admired, as it appears, for his use of taqiyyah,[66] which the Shīᶜites deemed it necessary to practise more than ever during this period. Ibn Bābūyah quotes several traditions in support of this practice, which was criticized by other sects.[67] Financially, too, this agent seems to have prospered better than his predecessors, mainly, because of the rich endowments made by the Shīᶜite viziers and other officials in the court.[68]

> This increased his respect among the Shīᶜites, since they knew that he was among the close associates of my father, who had declared him as thoroughly reliable. This excellence of his, and his trustworthiness, became famous,

recounts Umm Kulthūm bint Muḥammad b. Saᶜid al-ᶜAmrī.[69]

Immediately after his niyābah (deputyship), his seat was confirmed by a note received from the Imām on "the seventh night of Shawwāl, 305 (23rd November, 917)," another indication that there must have been some disagreement regarding his being accepted as the agent of the Imām and that the dispute had been solved, most probably, by the issuing of this note.[70]

The career of this agent was not without misfortunes. In the year 312/924-25 he was imprisoned by the Caliph

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al-Muqtadir (908-932) because of his failure to give the court the money which it was asking.[71] It was, probably, during this period that Abū al-Qāsim appointed Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī, known as al-Shalmaghānī (executed 322/933-34) as mediator between him and the Shīᶜites.[72] Al-Shalmaghānī, according to al-Najāshī, became jealous of Abū al-Qāsim's position[73] and not only claimed the position of the agent of the Imām but also of the twelfth Imām himself.[74] This deviation of al-Shalmaghānī from the Imāmite religion must have begun before Abū al-Qāsim's imprisonment, since Ibn al-Athīr mentions this incident of his apostasy in the beginning of Ḥamīd b. ᶜAbbās' vizierate,[75] which he held between the years 306-311/918-923;[76] and it was Abū al-Qāsim who revealed his apostasy.[77]

Al-Shalmaghānī, who at one time was highly esteemed by the Imāmites and whose writings remained reference works for later Imāmite scholars, greatly endangered the institution of the niyābah of the Imām, and it may be plausibly argued that the reason why this institution was terminated shortly after Abū al-Qāsim's shrewd leadership was because the nā'ib might possibly subsequently lay claim to the Imāmate itself. At times, persons like al-Shalmaghānī were instigated by patrons at the ᶜAbbāsid court.[78] Fortunately for the Imāmites, Abū al-Qāsim's influence and authority

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were so great that those who were already attracted by al-Ṣhalmaghānī's claims gave up their allegiance to him, as Ṭūsī says, when he issued a note cursing al-Shalmaghānī,[79] and another note was issued from the Imām himself through his agent. Ṭūsī reports that the note from the Imām had been issued through Abū al-Qāsim in the year 312/924-25 when the latter was in the prison located in the palace of the ᶜAbbāsid al-Muqtadir.[80] He had sent it to one of his trusted companions in Baghdād to be circulated among the Shīᶜites. The note received was as follows:

> May God acquaint you with all that is good; may He increase your age and make your end complete with your good deeds (lit. seal it with...). May God continue your prosperity.....Let those in whose faith and reliability you have trust know that Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī, known as al-Ṣhalmaghānī, may God hasten in sending His punishment on him, and not give him time /to repent/, has forsaken Islam and has parted from it. He has become a heretic and has claimed things which have resulted in unbelief (kufr) towards the Creator....[81]

Al-Shalmaghānī seems to have contested the niyābah[82] very strongly, judging by the way he described it to a person by the name of Abū ᶜAlī b. al-Junayd:

> Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn b. Rūḥ and I were involved in this matter /of claiming the niyābah/ and we both knew what we were doing. We were wrangling over this matter just as the dogs would do over a corpse. "But," the report adds, "The Shīᶜites paid no attention to him and cursed him and kept away from him."[83]

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Abū al-Qāsim died in the year 326/937 and was succeeded by ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samarrī.

The Fourth Agent, Abū al-Ḥasan ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samarrī (d. 329/940-41)

Nothing is known about his early life, but it seems he too belonged to the close associates of al-ᶜAskarī. His deputyship was too short-lived to have caused any changes to the institution of the niyābah. He died in 329/940-41. Before he died the Shīᶜites came and asked him about his successor and he said, "The matter is in the hands of God and He will bring it to accomplishment."[84] Here Ṭūsī adds his comment that therefore "the Complete Ghaybah (al-Tāmmah) is the one which occurred after the death of al-Samarrī, God be pleased with him."[85]

A few days before his death a note came from the Imām which read as follows:

> In the name of God. O ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad al-Samarrī, may God reward your brethren in your death, which is going to take place in six days' time. So take care of your affairs and do not appoint anyone in your place, since the complete occultation has taken place. I will not appear until God permits me to do so (may His name be exalted) and that will be after a long time; and after the hearts become hard and the earth is filled with wickedness. In the near future there will be those among my followers who will claim to have seen me. Beware, those who claim this before the rise of al-Sufyānī and the /hearing of the/ voice from the sky are liars....[86]

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Conclusion

The study of this period between 260-329/873-941 which is, according to the later Imāmite sources, the period of al-Ghaybat al-Qaṣīrah, or the period of al-Nuwwāb al-Arbaᶜ (the Four Agents) brings us to the following conclusions.

First, the inclusion of the list of the eminent personages, among whom the Four stand in high esteem, in the discussion on the ghaybah, however out of place it may seem, was required in order to prove the existence of the twelfth Imām. Ṭūsī makes this point clear as he says,

> We have mentioned accounts of the Sufarā' and Abwāb (the "gates") during the period of the ghaybah, because the validity of this depended on the proof of the Imāmate of the Ṣāḥib al-Zamān (peace be on him) and in the proof of their deputyship. The appearance of miracles at the hands of these persons is a clear proof of the Imāmate /of the twelfth Imām/. Thus it is not right for anyone to say, "What is the benefit of including their account in the book which treats the question of ghaybah?", since we have explained the benefit of this inclusion which is /nullification of the objection raised by the enemies/ the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām/.[87]

Secondly, the agents were more than four during this period, the four mentioned above being prominent in Baghdād, which had become heavily populated by the Shīᶜites during this period.[88] The prominence of the Four seems to have been in their shaping of the attitude of the Imāmites in respect of the ghaybah of the last Imām. It should be

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borne in mind that nowhere does Ṭūsī, whose Kitāb al-Ghaybah has been our main source of information on the lives of these agents, mention the Four, whom the later sources designate as al-Nuwwāb al-Arbaᶜ. The centre of the Imāmite activity during this period, as pointed out above, was Baghdād, whence the agents appointed by these eminent ones went to act as treasurers in other big Shīᶜite centres like Qumm and Rayy.

Thirdly, the claim of the agents that they were designated by the Imām himself was always in dispute, more so during the term of the third agent Abū al-Qāsim al-Nawbakhtī. Ṭūsī in his account of those who became "apostates" during this period of the Short Occultation and for whom a rescript cursing them was received from the Imām, mentions a person by the name of Aḥmad b. Hilāl al-Karkhī, a disciple of al-ᶜAskarī. Al-Karkhī had refused to accept the deputyship of Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān.

> In those days the Shīᶜites had concurred (ijtamaᶜat) that Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān (the second agent) was designated as the agent by al-ᶜAskarī. After the latter's death the Shīᶜites asked Aḥmad b. Hilāl the reason why he did not accept the deputyship of Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān and why did he not refer to him [in matters pertaining to religion] even after the Imām, who should be obeyed, had designated him. In reply to this he said to them, "I have not heard him designate him. But I do not refuse the deputyship of his father ᶜUthmān b. Saᶜīd. If I were sure that Abū Jaᶜfar (the

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second agent) was the agent of Sāhib al-Zamān, I would not have dared to oppose him."[89]

A rescript cursing him, adds Ṭūsī, was received by al-Ḥusayn b. Rūḥ, the third agent.[90]

The dispute over the question of the deputyship of the Imām had become so acute that not only had different persons claimed the prerogative but they also formulated new doctrines which, as the Imāmite theologians assert, had all the potentialities of destroying the foundations of Imāmite Shīᶜism in its formative stage at this time. Al-Shalmaghānī's claims to this position were seen above, and, had it not been for the astute leadership of Abū al-Qāsim, the newly developing doctrine of the Imāmate of the Hidden Ḥujjah would have been uprooted. Al-Shalmaghānī's influence can be measured by the following report concerning his various valuable works on different subjects which were in use even after his execution in 322/933-34. Abū al-Qāsim was asked, after al-Shalmaghānī's apostasy, about the latter's books:

> What shall we do with his books, since our homes are full of them? The agent replied, "I will tell you what al-ᶜAskarī told those who asked him about the books written by Banū Faḍḍāl,[91] "What shall we do with their books which have filled our home?", to which the Imām said, "Practise what they have reported /on our authority/ and leave that in which they have included their personal opinions."[92]

Besides al-Shalmaghānī, a number of other persons /a

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made similar claims, most of them being during the niyābah of the third agent, Abū al-Qāsim al-Nawbakhtī.[93] The reason for this situation was, most probably, that the generation of the close associates of the Imāms who had been in direct contact with al-Hādī and al-ᶜAskarī was declining as the days went by and the hope in the rise of the twelfth Imām by this time was greatly frustrated. Thus any ambitious person like al-Shalmaghānī or al-Ḥallāj who came forward with the claims of being the Bāb first and then emerged as the Imām himself, found adherents among the Imāmites. The Imāmites, it seems, no longer found the belief in the Imām al-Qā'im who was at the same time al-ghā'ib, adequate to redress their grievances in the growing political turmoil of the period. Abū al-Qāsim al-Nawbakhtī's competent leadership, his good relationship with the Sunnite Caliphate and the viziers, assisted in making his niyābah a strong and respectable institution for a short time. But the temporary nature of the niyābah itself was the main factor in its discontinuance in the year 329/940-41 after al-Samarrī's death. An additional factor seems to have been that the Imāmites, after al-Samarrī, had no eminent personage to take over the niyābah. The "leaving of the matter in the hands of God" in the note received by the last agent is an indirect indication of the absence of those close associates who

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could be entrusted with the task of al-Bāb between the Imām and his followers. If, perhaps, the later Imāmite theologians like al-Sharīf al-Murtadā or Tūsī had lived earlier, in all probability, one of them might have followed al-Samarrī and the niyābah would have continued beyond the year 329/940-41, but as an Imāmite would put it, "This was the will of God."

The Complete Occultation: al-Ghaybat al-Tāmmah

Al-Nuᶜmānī explains the second ghaybah as the one in which

> the agents and mediators were removed in accordance with God's will and planning which He exercises in the creation. /It also marks the period in which/ will occur, through testing and examination, the trial, sifting and purification of those who will be called upon /to acknowledge/ this matter just as He says /in the Qur'ān/: "It is not for God to leave the believers in the state in which ye are, until He hath distinguished the wicked from the good, and it is not for God to acquaint you with the unseen." [94] These two /occultations/ are as we have explained. May God place us among those who firmly hold on to the truth....[95]

Thus the Complete Occultation marks the end of the special deputyship (niyābat al-khāssah) which was discussed /al-/ above and the beginning of the complete occultation of the twelfth Imām in which the Shīᶜites, according to the above explanation, will have no appointed deputy of the Imām to lead them. Consequently, the Shīᶜites will undergo the hardship of being tested and sifted and purified, until the

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matter becomes clear for them; this will apparently occur with the emergence of the Imām.

Where and when then does much later interpretation of the delegation, albeit indirect, of this prerogative of the niyābah to the Imāmite jurists (mujtahidūn) begin? The only tradition which has been cited by the later Imāmite scholars, in support of the indirect niyabah of the Imāmite jurists during the second occultation is contained in a letter from the twelfth Imām received by a person named Isḥāq b. Yaᶜqūb[96] in reply to his enquiries about some religious questions. One of these seems to have related to the question: Who should be referred to in the future in case of difficulty in the matters pertaining to religion? The questions, which are not included in the text preserved by Ṭūsī, were actually submitted to the second agent, Muḥammad b. ᶜUthmān, to be presented to the Imām. So the period in which the tradition appears was that of the "special" agents of the Imām in the Short Occultation and not in the Complete Occultation, when, as the source says, the matter rested in "the hands of God." The tradition under consideration is as follows:

> As for the events which may occur /in future when you may need guidance in religious matters/ refer to the transmitters (ruwāt) of our sayings (ḥadīth) who are my ḥujjah to you and I am the Ḥujjah of God to you all.[97]

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The 'transmitters' in this report, as the translator of Majlisī's volume XIII of Biḥār al-Anwār comments, are limited to the jurisprudents (al-fuqahā'), the mujtahids and those who are marjaᶜ al-taqlīd of the Shīᶜites "after the ghaybah (the Short), since they have, by ijtihād and scholarly study of the sources of the Islamic Law, mastered the religious sciences and are able to grasp the religious rulings better than anyone else."[98] The absence of such an interpretation in Majlisī's text itself suggests that this interpretation of the ruwāt as the mujtahids belongs to the Qājār period of Iranian history when the power of the mujtahids increased tremendously, in the absence of any claim by the Qājār rulers to be the lineal descendants of the family of the Prophet. Of course, the beginning of this rise of power of the mujtahids dates back to the Safavid period when persons like Majlisī rose to eminence.

The text of this ḥadīth, as cited above seems to have been tampered with during the later period when tremendous importance must have been attached to this tradition. The text preserved by Ṭūsī has the last part of the sentence as follows: "....and I am the Ḥujjah to you all (ᶜalykum)." On the other hand Majlisī's text reads: "....and I am the Ḥujjah to them (the transmitters) (ᶜalayhim)." By this

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latter reading only the transmitters would become directly answerable to the Imām and not all the Shi^{c}ites, who would have to follow the rulings of one of these ruwāt, in case of difficulty. This would necessarily add to their power in deciding matters pertaining not only to religion but also to social and political problems. In all probability, the early Imāmite jurists, it appears, had not even thought of claiming such authority, perhaps because, there was no Imāmite temporal authority as yet, like that of the Ṣafavids at a later period, to rival them in claiming the niyābah of the Hidden Imām during the Complete Occultation.

Another example of this kind of re-interpretation of the early tradition relates to the Imāmite Mahdī's not requiring anybody's bay^{c}ah to him until his reappearance. This tradition, as we have seen above, accommodated the Muslim rulers during the early period of the Occultation, but was re-interpreted during the later Ṣafavid period, when a struggle for power began between the mujtahids and the Shi^{c}ite rulers of Iran, who professed the Imāmite religion as had the Būyids during the early years of the Occultation. As seen above, the Imāmite jurists accommodated the rule of the Būyids by interpreting the tradition about the Qā'im not requiring anybody's allegiance paid to him since he was

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in occultation. The absence of this requirement of the bayᶜah meant the absence of iṭāᶜah -- obedience to the Imām, which was probably the reason why the Būyids preferred the Imāmite form of Shīᶜism to any other. But the later jurists, who were challenging the Ṣafavid and Qājār kings on the question of religious supremacy, reinterpreted the ḥadīth saying that any ruler in a state which recognizes the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām must recognize the ḥujjah of the Imām, that is the mujtahid as the sole custodian of the religion.[99] None of the early sources mention anything about the "illegitimacy of any state", even an Imāmite one, pending the return of the twelfth Imām,[100] which is a much later development in the political theory of the Imāmite Mahdī.

Earlier it was mentioned that the Imāmite traditionists, in proving the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām, relied greatly on the traditions and on interpretations of the verses of the Qur'ān. This is demonstrated in Ibn Bābūyah's exposition of the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām. He says:

> Our enemies are questioning us in respect of this subject /of the ghaybah and the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām/. They should know that the belief in the ghaybah of Ṣāḥib al-Zamān rests on the belief in the Imāmate of his forefathers, (peace be on them); and the belief in the Imāmate of his forefathers rests on the verification of the Prophet about his and his forefathers' Imāmate. This is so, because, this subject concerns the

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Sharī^{c}ah and cannot be established by reason alone. The religious injunctions are based on the Book and the Sunnah, as God says in the Qur'ān: ".:..and if ye quarrel about anything /which concerns religion/ then refer it to God and the Apostle."[101] Thus when the Book, the Sunnah and the rational proof (hujjat al-^{c}aql) bear witness for us, what we say is praiseworthy. We say that all the groups -- Zaydites and Imāmites -- agree that the Prophet said, "Verily I am leaving among you two objects of high estimation and of care (thagalayn):[102] the Book of God and my near kindred, my family. They are my vicegerents after me, and they will not part from each other until they return at the Pool (hawd)[103] /on the Day of Judgement/." They are informed about this tradition and do accept it. Hence, it is necessary /to maintain/ that there should be one among the descendants /of the Prophet/ all the time with the Qur'ān, who has the knowledge about the revelation and knows its interpretation; and who should inform /people/ of the will of God just as the Prophet did, /that is,/ with certainty. The knowledge of the interpretation of the Book of such a person should be based neither on contrivance nor on deduction, since the knowledge of the Prophet was not of this genre; that is to say, he did not obtain knowledge by deduction, extraction or reasoning. It is not permitted for such a person to indulge in philological or lexical explanation of the Qur'ān; rather, he should inform people about the purpose of God and explain it from God so that his explanation be the proof for the people. Similarly, it is necessary that the knowledge of the descendants of the Prophet about the Book should be based on certainty, enlightenment and intuition. God, the Exalted, in praising the Prophet has said, "Say, this is my way, I invite /ye all/ unto God; with clear sight, /which/ I and He who followeth me /possess/."[104] Thus those who 'follow' him are from among his family and his kindred, who inform people about the purpose of God, as it appears

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> in the Book and as He wishes /it to be explained/ through certainty, knowledge and insight. Since the purpose of God is manifest and uncovered, it is necessary for us to maintain that the Book is not left without the informer (al-mukhbir) from the progency of the Prophet who knows the interpretation (ta'wil) to the revelation of the Book. This is what one should comprehend from the hadīth of al-Thaqalayn (the two objects of high estimation and of care, i.e. the Book and the Family).[105]

The above argument clearly shows the extent to which the traditionists were dependent on the traditions and their interpretation, the verses of the Qur'ān and their explanation, in vindicating the ghaybah and thereby the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām.

The reasons for the ghaybah, according to the traditionists

According to the Imāmite traditionists the main reason for the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām was al-khawf, i.e. fear of being killed. Zurārah,[106] the famous companion of the sixth Imām, is reported to have asked the Imām about the reason for ghaybah. The Imām, pointing to his stomach said, "He is afraid of being killed."[107] This fear was peculiar to the twelfth Imām because, as the tradition asserts, his forefathers were not required to rise with the sword and declare jihād against their enemies. They were strictly practising taqiyyah and did not openly call on the people to follow them. Thus the rulers felt safe from

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that direction. On the other hand, the twelfth Imām was believed to be al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād and consequently, was believed to wipe out injustice on earth. Therefore, the rulers were looking for him in order to kill him.[108]

To these traditional reasons al-Nuᶜmānī adds two other reasons, the ghaybah, he says, was meant as a test for the followers of the Imām so as to see who remained steadfast in acknowledging the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām.[109] The other reason for the ghaybah was to save the Imām from accepting the bayᶜah from oppressive rulers, and to postpone the whole question of obedience to the Imām until his reappearance.[110] This Imām, unlike his predecessors, will not practise taqiyyah and will manifest the truth by overthrowing the unjust rule of the enemies of God.[111]

But all these reasons were insufficient to satisfy the Imāmites, it seems, and a new tradition was reported saying that it was impossible to comprehend the reason behind the ghaybah until the Imām appeared, as had happened in the story of al-Khiḍr and Moses.[112] It is reported that the sixth Imām was asked the reason for the ghaybah of the Imām. In reply he said that they (the Imāms) were not permitted to disclose the reason behind the ghaybah. But, the Imām added,

> the philosophy behind his ghaybah is similar to that of the Ḥujaj of God who preceded him. The reason

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> in all those cases was not revealed until after the appearance of the Ḥujjah in question, as had happened in the case of al-Khiḍr.... This matter is from God, the Exalted; it is one of the close secrets of God. He is wise; this is what we accept and all His actions have reasons behind them although they may not be comprehensible to us.[113]

With the establishment of the Būyids and of conditions favourable to the Imāmites, the question of the twelfth Imām's fear of being killed was challenged. Ibn Bābūyah was asked why the Imām continued to be in ghaybah when the conditions of his Shī'ah had changed drastically; the Shī'ites were now more numerous and had more freedom to practise their religion openly. The reply given by Ibn Bābūyah is similar to the tradition cited above, that the true situation would remain unknown until the Imām reappeared.[114] But, he continues, the fact that the Shī'ites were in great numbers did not guarantee the safety of the Imām if he appeared, since not all the Shī'ites could be trusted. Ibn Bābūyah cites the example of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam who once discussed the necessity of the Imāmate with a Syrian in the presence of the sixth Imām. At one point the Syrian asked Hishām who was the Imām to whom he was making reference and Hishām, without considering any danger which might befall the Imām, revealed him. Therefore, Ibn Bābūyah concludes that the same thing might happen in the case of the twelfth

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Imām who was being sought to be killed and whose identity might be revealed by his followers in their discussion with their enemies.[115]

Then, the question was put: What was the benefit of having an Imām in ghaybah for such a long time? "Would it not be better to say that there is no Imām on the earth at all, rather than saying that 'it is permissible that the Imām remain in ghaybah for full thirty years'?"[116] Ibn Bābūyah replies,

> the non-existence of the Imām himself on the earth would mean the disappearance of the Hujjah from the earth and the end of the religious injunctions, because these would have no protector. But if the Imām, in fear of being killed, conceals himself by the command of God, and if he has the known means of mediation, then the Hujjah continues to be on the earth. This is so because he himself is present and the means of mediation are present too. It is only his opinion on certain things and his commands and interdictions which are not manifest. This does not invalidate the presence of the Hujjah, since this also happened with the Hujaj before him, as in the case of the Prophet himself who concealed himself for a long period in the valley of Abū Ṭālib.[117]

Jābir, the well-known companion of the Prophet, is reported to have asked the Prophet about the benefit of having the Imām in ghaybah to which he replied:

> Yes (by the One who sent me as the Prophet!), they /the Shīʿites/ will obtain light with the help of his light and will benefit by the means of his love (wilāyah) during his occultation just as

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> the people benefit from the sun while it is covered by clouds, O Jābir....[118]

The transition from the traditionist vindication of the Imāmate and the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām to the highly theological one was marked by Ibn Bābūyah (d. 381/991-92) himself, who on many occasions found it expedient to quote the mutakallimūn of the Imāmites in his vindication of the Imāmite stand. But the kalām cited therein does not include any of the themes which will be discussed in Part II of this chapter. There is, however, mention of one such theme, that is the ᶜiṣmah (infallibility) of the Imām, which in Ibn Bābūyah's exposition is simply a requirement in the Imām if he is to be followed as the one true Imām.

> We are bound to confess, says Ibn Bābūyah, "the infallibility of the Imām just as we are bound to maintain his Imāmate. But ᶜiṣmah is not something having an outward existence which can either be seen or witnessed. So if we accept an Imām and reject his being infallible, our belief is not sound. Since we are bound to accept something unseen in the Imām, it is permissible that we be bound to accept the Imāmate of the one hidden from our eyes, simply because it is one of the signs of the wisdom of God...."[119]

The use of ᶜiṣmah here as an unseen quality of the Imām, its compulsory acceptance as a condition of the Imāmate, and its comparison with the acceptance of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām, are entirely new developments in the Imāmite

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writings of this period as compared with al-Nuᶜmānī's statement about ᶜismah or the Imām being maᶜsūm:

> He is maᶜsūm, confirmed, divinely aided, firm; he is protected from imperfection (khalal), error (zalal), obstinate persistence in disobedience (ᶜināḍ) and idle talk (khaṭal). He has been endowed with these because he is His Ḥujjah to His slaves, and His witness to His creatures; and this is the grace (faḍl) of God.[120]

Conclusion

The Complete Occultation (al-Ghaybat al-Tāmmah), according to the Imāmite writers, began with the end of the special niyābah of the Four Agents of the twelfth Imām. During the second occultation no deputy was to be appointed by the Imām and the "matter is in the hands of God" until the Imām reappears. This does not mean that the Imāmites were left without mediators, since the ruwāt were indirectly designated to perform the duties of the special agents of the Imām, as far as religious problems were concerned. That these ruwāt were interpreted as the mujtahids and the development of their authority as the sole interpreters of the will of the Imām is doubtless of much later origin. The question of the illegitimacy of the Islamic state, especially one with professing Imāmite rulers, also belongs to approximately the same era, when the religious classes interpreted the ḥadīth of the ruwāt in order to accommodate the view of

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their being the Ḥujjah to the people in the absence of the Imām, who was in turn Ḥujjah to them.

The whole question of this rivalry between the religious and temporal authority in the later Ṣafavid and the Qājār period has been dealt with by scholars like A.K.S. Lambton, N. Keddie and H. Algar; it falls beyond the scope of the present inquiry. But, the early formative period and the systematization of the Imāmite doctrines, especially, the doctrine of the Mahdī, has not received its due attention by these scholars, although a study of the early period is essential in order to get the full picture of the later additions and re-interpretations exercised by the ruwāt.

The question of the two forms of ghaybah (the Short and the Complete) which is the result of the evolution of the doctrine of the Hidden Imām from his being al-Qā'im to his being proclaimed as al-Mahdi, and from the institution of the niyābah of the special agents of the Imām to the claims set forward by the indirect mediators of the Imām -- the ruwāt, therefore assumes great importance. The prolonged disappearance of the Imām on the one hand, gave tremendous powers to the jurists and offered them complete freedom of action as far as the religious systematization of Imāmite Shī'ism was concerned. In consequence, [illegible]

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Shī'ī works were compiled and composed during this period. On the other hand, the jurists were confronted with the delicate problem of establishing the authority of the Hidden Imām, through the acknowledgement of which alone they could endorse their actions as the direct or indirect mediators between the Imām and his Shī'ites.

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PART II

The Theological View of the ghaybah

The period of the Short Occultation (874-941) was the formative period of the doctrine of the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, which has been dealt with in the first part of this chapter. In the course of time, with the development of kalām, the whole question of the Imāmate, and the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām in particular, was examined with the aid of the sophisticated technique employed by the practitioners of this art. Initially, the Imāmite mutakallimūn devoted themselves to a simple vindication of the doctrine of the necessity of the Imāmate and the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, based on the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān and the prophetic tradition, including those uttered by the Shī^{c}ī Imāms. The transition to the theological defence of these doctrines, by subordinating them to the more central dogma of the Justice (^{c}adl) of God, was marked by al-Mufīd's predecessor Ibn Bābūyah (d. 991-2),[1] whose view on ghaybah has been discussed above. The prolonged ghaybah of the Imām, who, as the early sources show, was expected to reappear in the near future, seems to have put pressure on scholars like al-Mufīd and his successors in this kalām school, to come forward and meet the challenge of the more profound criticisms made by the Mu^{c}tazilites and

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Ash^{c}arites. These criticisms related to the subject of the necessity of the Imāmate; the ^{c}ismah of the Imām; whether the Imām was the luṭf of God; the relationship between the Imām and the taklīf; and, finally, the rationale of having an Imām in occultation. All these themes were supposed to constitute al-dalīl al-^{c}aqli (the rational argument) in support of the wujūb naṣb al-Imām (the obligation to appoint the Imām), supplementing the earlier al-dalīl al-sam^{c}ī ('traditional' argument; i.e., one based on the religious texts -- both the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet).

The Imāmite scholars from al-Mufīd onward questioned the reliability of that part of al-dalīl al-sam^{c}ī which was based on the traditions, because apparently, fabricated traditions and unauthentic isnāds (chains of transmission) were coming to light, although the facts of the fabrication of traditions in certain cases and the defects of their isnads were not always admitted, at least, in the early days. But Ṭūsī, whose keen eye did not fail to observe the discrepancies and the spurious origin of some parts of al-dalīl al-sam^{c}ī, openly declared that not only had the transmitters not reported the whole truth about what the Prophet had said, but had tampered with the facts, changing them according to their personal likes and dislikes.[2] What then was the other way to reach the truth (al-ḥaqq)?

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It was this problem which doubtless impelled the Imāmite theologians to embark on al-dalīl al-ᶜaqlī, since it would not only substantiate the necessity of the Imāmate but would also defend the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām.

In the discussion of the necessity of the Imāmate in kalām, the two dominant themes of al-luṭf and al-taklīf, which form the two major pillars supporting the dogma of the Imāmate, bring to light an important dichotomy in the method of establishing what Ṭūsī terms al-ḥaqq (the truth), namely, whether the aṣālah (fundamentality)[3] of ᶜaql is superior to the aṣālah of samᶜ or not. Al-Mufīd asserts that the Muᶜtazilites of Baghdād and most of the Murji'ites maintained the necessity of the Imāmate on both these grounds -- ᶜaqlan wa samᶜan. Others, including the Muᶜtazilites of Baṣrah, a group of the Murji'ites and the majority of the Zaydites, held the Imāmate to be incumbent on the ground of al-samᶜ only, and refused to accept the aṣālah of al-ᶜaql in proving the appointment of the Imām.[4] The Muᶜtazilites of Baghdād, recognizing the aṣālah of al-ᶜaql, maintained that the investiture of the Imām was expedient for both wordly and religious affairs, and accepted the method of ikhtiyār in this matter.[5] The Imāmites, who were preaching the maṣlaḥat al-ᶜāmmah (the public interest of the Muslim

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community) in supporting the necessity of the Imāmate, made sure that a condition was attached to the fulfilment of this maṣlaḥah. This condition was that any threat from the oppressors to the safety of the Imām should be removed in order to enable him to carry out his function as an Imām. This was to vindicate the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, who was unable to stand by his duty to the maṣlaḥat al-ᶜāmmah because of the threat to his life. It was probably for this reason that, from al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022-23) onwards, the Imāmites seem to contribute to the aṣālah of al-ᶜaql in establishing the truth about the Imāmate during the ghaybah; and the only way, asserts Ṭūsī, to prove the existence of the Hidden Imām is by the means of al-dalīl al-ᶜaqlī, of which al-luṭf is the main example, which makes it inevitable that the Imām should exist at all times.[6]

This may support the argument that the traditionist view was by its nature likely to prove effective only for a short period; in fact, this must have been its function, since the prolonged ghaybah of the Imām had not been envisaged at that period, when al-Qā'im was believed to have disappeared temporarily only, to return shortly to establish justice and equity. When much later sources on the twelfth Imām are examined, it becomes evident that al-dalīl al-ᶜaqlī had

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acquired a more prominent place in substantiating the ghaybah and the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām than al-dalīl al-samᶜī, which discussed the designation of the twelfth Imām by the Prophet and the preceding Imāms merely by quoting the traditions and verses of the Qur'ān, interpreted to support the arguments. One such source is an important work on the twelfth Imām, entitled Dār al-Salām, by one Shaykh Maḥmūd ᶜIrāqī Maythamī (b. 1240/1824-25, d. 1306/1888-89 (?)),[7] written during the Qājār period.

The very first chapter of this work deals with "The necessity of the existence of the infallible Imām in this age", and discusses the kalām argument of the principle of lutf and taklīf in addition to the extremely complicated theme of the necessity for the Imāmate. In some places this chapter resembles parts of the Nasirean Ethics by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.[8] Indirectly, it alludes to the possible rivalry which may occur between kings and ᶜulamā' when there is overlapping between their temporal and spiritual functions; a particularly important cause of friction, of course, is the sort of claim made by the Ṣafavid Kings, namely, that they were the representatives on earth of the Hidden Imām -- a claim which carried with it inevitable implications of infallibility. In actual fact, the Qājār Kings did not make

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this claim, but Maythamī dismisses any possible claim as out of the question, by saying that although the community needs an infallible leader, both the Sulṭān and the ᶜulamāᵓ are fallible.[9] The early sources do not deal with such points in the discussion on luṭf or ᶜismah. Be that as it may, the endeavours of al-Mufīd and his erudite pupils al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā and Ṭusī came to fruition when the set of arguments based on the aṣālat al-ᶜaql used by them became the standard view of the Imāmite theologians in their future vindication of the doctrine of the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām.

The Imāmite kalām considers the doctrine of the Imāmate as one of the principles of the faith (uṣūl al-dīn); and since it is based on matters concerning reason (al-umūr al-ᶜaqliyyah) in which there is no way to probability, and since the reason for ghaybah is based on something which arouses doubt, "it is better to begin the discussion with the Imāmate."[10] Moreover, the doctrine of the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām is a derivative (farᶜ) from the principles of the Imāmate.[11] Thus the mutakallimūn commenced their exposition with one of the al-umūr al-ᶜaqliyyah, namely, taklīf.

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The Principle of taklīf and the Imāmate

The word taklīf is derived from the root KLF, the Second Form of which has the meaning of "ordering a person to do" (something which is difficult, troublesome or inconvenient to him). As a theological term it means to apprise a person that there is benefit or harm in doing or not doing certain acts, the following of which would inflict upon him hardship, but would not reach a degree of compulsion (iljā').[12] The apprisal (al-iᶜlām), the abstention of hardship, and the denial of compulsion constitute the basis of al-taklīf. The apprisal is in the sense that God, who is the Mukallif, informs the mukallaf (upon whom the taklīf is imposed) about the nature of the acts which make up the taklīf, such as the obligation of performing those acts which are classified as incumbent (wājib) and refraining from those which are classified as prohibited (muḥarramāt). This apprisal can come about in two ways: first, by creating the necessary knowledge (al-ᶜilm al-darūrī)[13] in man so as to enable him to grasp those injunctions which can be known by the aid of this type of knowledge, such as the general ethical axioms, good and evil which are rational categories and can be established by unaided reason; the second way is to set up rational and traditional guidance by means of which

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man can reflect and obtain information on the nature of the acts to be performed by him. In this second form is included the revelation of God sent through the Hujaj, which is the principal source of the traditional guidance.[14]

Al-Hillī, commenting on Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī's definition of taklīf, says that it is the will (irādah) of somebody (i.e. God) to whom obedience is incumbent (wājib al-ṭāᶜah), with the condition that His will should not have been preceded by any other will, and that this will should have been made known. The will (irādah) referred to here, is the revelation of God to His hujjah, for the guidance of mankind and this will is the first will, that is, not preceded by any other will. Hence, adds al-Hillī, a father who forms one of those to whom obedience is incumbent (others being God, the Prophet, the Imām, the sayyid /the master/,[15] and the benefactor), cannot be said to have imposed taklīf of praying (salāt) on his son because his will was preceded by that of the will of God, who first imposed this duty on him.[16]

It is thus clear that taklīf can be substantiated only from the direction of God, and that taklīf is good only if it is the will of God. In other words, that which is required of a mukallaf should be made clear to the reason in the form of necessary knowledge or specified in the

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Religious Law, which together constitute the will of God.[17] Why is taklīf imposed?

Taklīf, say the Imāmites, is imposed in order to associate him with the reward (al-thawāb). It resembles something which wounds a person and then treats him. There is, however, a difference between a wound and taklīf and this is that in taklīf there are great, lasting benefits as compared with the wound which is cured. The cure is nothing more than a relief from a particular harm, after which a person returns to his normal condition. Cupping (al-iḥtijām) is more close to taklīf in its effect, because it is carried out to protect a soul from destruction.[18]

The goodness (ḥusn) of taklīf is explained thus. Man, say the Imāmites, cannot live by himself, because he has been created in such a way that he is in need of the aid of others in regard to his own sustenance, clothing, dwelling place and such other things. This mutual aid cannot materialize except by their coming together. This would necessarily give rise to disputes and quarrels, since every one would be working for his own benefit and would become exasperated with anyone who would get in his way.[19] Consequently, there would be a need for settling disputes and directing the community life. This can be achieved by a

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Religious Law-giver (shāriᶜ), who is distinguished from others by the ability to perform miracles so that all the people may follow him; such a person is referred to as a prophet. However, since the prophet does not remain forever, there is a need for justice to continue by the putting into practice of the beneficial tradition taught by him in the following matters:

(a) For the contentment of the soul, in order to protect it from the desire of the attainment of bodily appetites (al-shahawāt) and prevent it from succumbing to the irascible faculty (al-quwwat al-ghaḍabiyyah) which together form the two wings of corruption.

(b) In order that man may continue to contemplate lofty matters such as the creation of the world, the Hereafter, and reflect on the attributes of God and the wonders of His creation, all of which lead to the increase of cognition and the broadening of one's vision so that one may be able to perceive that which lies beyond the world of matter.

(c) In order that mankind may remember the admonitions in the Religious Law, so as to execute justice in the world and increase the recompense and reward in the Hereafter.[20]

Thus it can be affirmed that the purpose of appointing prophets is to guide mankind towards the attainment of great reward in this life and the next. God, whose actions

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are not without purpose, has imposed taklīf on mankind so as to expose man to the great benefit which can be attained only through taklīf. It is largely because of this purpose of taklīf that taklīf is good.[21] In this exposition of taklīf as being good the Imāmites and the Muᶜtazilites are in agreement. But the Ashᶜarites, according to al-Hillī, argue that to do something in order to fulfil a purpose shows the imperfection of the doer who seeks perfection by doing it. This cannot be held about the actions of God, who is perfect; therefore, taklīf cannot be held to be good.[22] Al-Ghazālī in one of his refutations of the Muᶜtazilite position about the actions of God, emphatically states that God cannot be expected to work for a purpose.[23]

The mutakallimūn have also disagreed on the question of the obligation of the imposition of taklīf on God. The Imāmites and the Muᶜtazilites maintain that the imposition of taklīf is incumbent upon God; on the grounds that the intellect perceives advantage in its imposition and disadvantage in its omission.[24] In other words, the intellect is capable of perceiving good and evil in the imposition and omission of taklīf, respectively. On the other hand, the Ashᶜarites do not believe the imposition of taklīf to be incumbent on God, since they do not recognize the objective nature of good and evil. No action can be held

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morally valuable unless it is performed under obedience to divine commands. Consequently, it is impossible to know good and evil except from revelation. It is the command and interdiction of God through the Religious Law-giver alone that a moral act can be categorized as good or evil.[25] Thus the Muᶜtazilites and the Imāmites, who insisted on the objective nature of moral acts, which are therefore discernible by reason, maintained that taklīf was incumbent on God; while the Ashᶜarites, who maintained that all acts were neutral in value and were made good or evil only by being commanded by God, were opposed to the very idea of making something incumbent on God. God's actions, they said, cannot be limited by what the human intellect conceives as incumbent; nor can He be considered blameworthy for not doing that which the intellect thinks He ought to do. The Imāmites argued that man, although imperfect in his abilities, if he failed to do what he ought to do would still be considered blameworthy by God and would be punished by Him for having failed to carry out His command. This being so, they argued, how could God be considered to have failed to do that which He should have done. This would impute evil to God and would render Him an oppressor, which is impossible. The use of the term wājib for God, they say, is in the sense that if other than He had failed to do that act, that person

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would have been considered blameworthy; but God, under any circumstances is free from such blame and thus He will not fail to do that act. The use of the term wujūb for God is in order to free Him from any attribution of imperfection.[26]

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in his argument in support of the obligation of the imposition of taklīf on God says that it is taklīf that restrains man from doing evil.[27] Man intrinsically has an inclination toward corruption. Thus if God did not make preventive laws to weaken this inclination prior to the creation of laws for his welfare, it would be like tempting him to do evil, which is vile. This evil is removed by imposing taklīf, since taklīf will hold him back from corruption and the desired purpose will be achieved, otherwise the shortcoming of man will be held against God.[28]

Taklīf on the basis of its apprisal, as seen above, is divided into two kinds: al-taklīf al-ʿaqlī (what is known by reason) and al-taklīf al-samʿī (what is known by revelation or something dependent on it in one way or another, such as ḥadīth, ijmāʿ and qiyās -- the sources of Law). The goodness of al-taklīf al-ʿaqlī is self evident, since it is under this kind of taklīf that man can know by reason, independently of revelation, his primary obligations. The goodness of al-taklīf al-samʿī lies in its being instrumental in disposing man to perform his primary obligations, and

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these obligations are prescribed by the sam^{c}. Thus al-taklīf al-sam^{c}ī is explained as being lutf in order to perform al-taklīf al-^{c}aqlī. The fact that demonstrates this is that when a mukallaf is assiduous in the matters of religion as prescribed by al-sam^{c}, such as praying, fasting and other prescribed forms of devotions, he will doubtless be more prepared to pursue the primary obligations which are known by al-^{c}aql independently, such as acquisition of knowledge, paying debts and showing gratitude for benevolence toward oneself. Thus al-taklīf al-sam^{c}ī is lutf for al-taklīf al-^{c}aqlī in the sense that the former facilitates the performance of the latter by providing details of obligations unknown to it. Therefore, the imposition of al-taklīf al-sam^{c}ī is incumbent upon God, otherwise negligence of reason and the rational principles would become inevitable, thereby defeating the purpose of creating man.[29]

The foundation of al-taklīf al-sam^{c}ī is the Prophethood and the Imāmate, which together constitute the institution of the guidance of mankind. This kind of guidance is the lutf of God bestowed on His creatures. It is through these Hujaj, the Prophet and the Imāms, that God makes His will known to mankind and exposes them to the attainment of al-thawāb. Thus the Imāmites maintained that as long as

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there remained taklīf there remained a need for the hujjah from God,[30] to act as an intermediary who could elucidate taklīf. He is the lutf of God whose presence facilitates a mukallaf to draw near to obedience and refrain from disobedience.[31] Thus his appointment becomes incumbent on God and he must exist at all times to expose mankind toward the attainment of al-thawāb. During the ghaybah of the Hujjah, the twelfth Imām, the situation of taklīf changes. In the state of ghaybah, Ṭūsī says, which is the result of the continuous threat to the Imām's life, taklīf is removed from that person who is unable to follow certain injunctions[32] and it is certain people who should be blamed because they are threatening the safety of the Imām; such people should be held responsible for the removal of taklīf in certain cases and not the Imām, who is the lutf of God, but has been compelled to remain in occultation.[33]

The relationship between taklīf and lutf is so intimate in the Imāmite kalām that it appears as though they form the foundation on which the whole dogma of religious leadership, that is al-nubuwwah and al-imāmah, is constructed. It is mainly for this reason, it seems, that in the rational proof virtually the whole stress was laid on these two principles. Both lutf and taklīf have the same goal of

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advancing man toward obedience to God and assisting him in refraining from disobedience (maᶜṣiyah). Since God has human welfare at heart, both the Imāmites and the Muᶜtazilites[34] made it incumbent upon God to bestow luṭf on mankind. There is, however, an essential difference: the Imāmite made luṭf incumbent on God because of the liberality (al-jūd) and the generosity (al-karam) with which God has been distinguished and which make it necessary for Him to do the best for the mukallafūn as long as taklīf remains enforced;[35] the Muᶜtazilites on the other hand, made luṭf incumbent upon God because of His justice and if He failed to bestow that He would be an oppressor.[36]

The Principle of luṭf

Before embarking on a discussion of the actual relationship of luṭf and the twelfth Imām, it is expedient to examine the outlines of the principle itself as expounded by the Imāmite theologians.

In the Shiᶜi kalām, as well as the kalām of the Muᶜtazilites, discussion of luṭf logically follows that of taklīf -- which, as defined above, is the will of God revealed in the interest of mankind. God is wise and He exercises proper planning in His creation. Hence, no futile action

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(al-ʿabath) can be attributed to Him. Taklīf is one of those things which reveal the wisdom of God and His purpose in creation. It exposes a person to great benefits which cannot be attained by any other means except taklīf.[37] But it cannot be forced on a person, as it would lose the meaning of "exposure" (taʿrīḍ) which is the main characteristic of taklīf. In this sense a person is shown to have a free hand in the choice of his actions, as he pleases, contrary to what the Ashʿarites maintained about man's actions, namely, that they are created by God. The freedom of man in choosing his actions gives rise to a crucial question concerning God's purpose: How can God procure His purpose in human affairs in such a case when man intrinsically has inclination towards disobedience, and how can taklīf, which is part of His purpose in creation, be fulfilled if it can do no more than expose a person toward obedience?

It is at this point, it seems, that the principle of luṭf must have been introduced. The following tradition in al-Kulaynī's compilation may well in large measure have served to lay down the earliest outline of this principle. This is, however, the only tradition in al-Kāfī which tells us something about the principle of luṭf, in its crude form. The tradition referred to is as follows:

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> A person asked Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, "Does God force man to sin?" He replied, "No." The person went on to ask, "Does God leave him free to do what he pleases?" He again said, "No." The person then asked, "The/how does he act?" The Imām said, "The luṭf of your Lord is between the two /extremes/."[38]

The Mukallif (God) imposes taklīf on the mukallaf, but without using compulsion (iljā'), because compulsion nullifies taklīf. Luṭf is that thing through which the mukallaf by drawing closer to obedience and refraining from disobedience attains al-thawāb. It is not a tool by which a person is enabled to achieve a purpose, rather it is in addition to taklīf. It is possible without luṭf and with taklīf alone to obey or disobey. But luṭf induces a person to taklīf without the use of force, and allows the person to choose his course of action by his own free will. It is clear that obedience is the result of the intimation by luṭf and had it not been for it a person, although empowered to choose of his free will between obedience and disobedience, would not have chosen to obey God. Thus, the Imāmites contend that it is incumbent upon God to bestow luṭf, because if the Mukallif knows that the mukallaf will not obey except by means of luṭf and if He imposes taklīf without it then the purpose of creation is invalidated. This was the manner in which the Imāmites and the Muᶜtazilites, who contributed to the belief that man's actions were his

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own responsibility and not God's, made sure that God would procure His purpose in human affairs. Thus the "the lutf of your Lord" in the above cited tradition suggests the underlying principle of lutf between the two uses of the reply "No" by the Imām Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq. In other words, man was not to be left free in his actions nor were his actions to be predestined but there was to be a middle way between these two extremes regulated by the principle of lutf, through which the purpose of God would be procured. It was, understandably, for this reason that the Ashᶜarites did not find it necessary to uphold this principle of lutf in their dogmatics, since they maintained that all man's actions were created by God and there was no fear that His will would not be done.

The Principle of lutf and the Imāmate

The relationship between taklīf and lutf has been discussed above. An attempt will now be made to examine lutf in the perspective of the doctrine of the Imāmate as propounded in the Shīᶜī kalām. But before doing so it is relevant to set forth the Muᶜtazilite view which apparently throws light on the doctrine as held by the Imāmites.

The majority of the Muᶜtazilites, according to

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al-Ashᶜarī, maintained that there was not among the objects within God's power to enact (magdūr) a luṭf which, if he had exercised it towards anyone who did not believe, he would have believed. God has no such luṭf by means of which, if He were to act, it could be said that He determines or does not determine, a man's faith. God acts toward none of His servants in any way other than what is most salutary (aṣlaḥ) for him in his religion, and urges all of them to act according to what He has commanded them. He does not withhold anything from any of His servants which he needs in order to discharge his obligations to Him. In return for God's concern, man renders Him obedience which entitles him to the thawāb which was promised to him. This means that man is free to choose his actions.[39]

When the Muᶜtazilites were asked whether it is in God's power to do that which is better for His creatures than what He actually does, they replied that there was no termination (lā nihāyah) to the good things which God could do. It was inconceivable, said the Muᶜtazilites, that, if doing the best for man was the objective, God would not do His utmost to aid man.[40] Therefore they objected to the very question, which suggested that God had the power to do something even better for His creatures and had omitted to do it -- even though He knew that they had need of the best

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in order to discharge that which had been imposed upon them as taklīf. In other words, they said, God will do that which is most salutary for all His creatures in their religion. Thus luṭf was incumbent on God.

But there were other Muᶜtazilites, such as Bishr b. al-Muᶜtamir (d. 210/825-26) who believed that God has luṭf, and if He bestows it on anyone who He knows does not believe then he comes to believe,[41] but it is not incumbent on God to do this. If God exercises this luṭf, and men believe by virtue of it, then they are entitled to the same reward for the belief exercised by its presence to which they would be entitled if they believed without it. Bishr also maintained that it was not incumbent upon God to do everything that was most salutary for His creatures. This was impossible since there was no limit to what He could do in this way. But it was incumbent on Him to do what was most salutary for men in the discharge of religious obligation and to remove any obstacles which might stand in the way of their performing that which was made taklīf on them.[42]

Jaᶜfar b. Ḥarb (d. 236/850-51), another Muᶜtazilite, was also a believer in luṭf. He seems to have refuted Bishr's view of luṭf which appeared to override the doctrine of the freedom of man and made him a believer without having

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a choice. Ja^{c}far b. Ḥarb, according to al-Ash^{c}arī, made it clear that the one upon whom the luṭf of God was bestowed became a believer voluntarily (ikhtiyār^{an}), which did not entitle him to as much thawāb as he would have had if he had believed without the luṭf.[43] His view of aṣlaḥ is that this could be described as what God has done with them, having left them without luṭf which would have made them believers but deserving only the lesser reward. This is so because God does not expose His creatures except to the highest and noblest of stations and to the best and most abundant reward. Ja^{c}far b. Ḥarb is said to have reverted from this view to that of the majority of the Mu^{c}tazilites.[44]

Al-Jubbā'ī (d. 300/915-16), says al-Ash^{c}arī, held that God does not have luṭf which could be described as the power (al-qudrah) to cause someone to believe who He knows does not believe. Indeed God does what is most salutary for His creatures in their religion. But if there is something which He knows would cause them to believe or prosper by it and He does not do it then He would be a willer of corruption and this is impossible. It is not that He has no power to do that for His creatures which, if He did it, would increase their obedience and augment their reward. But al-Jubbā'ī adds that such an act is not incumbent upon

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Him, and if He omitted to do such a thing, He could not be charged with acting futilely in summoning man to the faith.[45]

The above Mu^{c}tazilite views show clearly that their view on lutf was greatly dependent on their attitude toward human freedom, and the doctrine of the Justice of God. The problem of maṣlaḥah had its origin in the debate regarding the belief that if God is wise He must act wisely. If He is wise, said the Mu^{c}tazilites, then He will do that which is best for His creatures. Hence, if by exercising lutf men will increase in their obedience to Him, He would bestow it. The concept of lutf seems to have been an outcome of endeavours to establish some sort of connection between the complete freedom of action in man, as maintained by the Mu^{c}tazilites, and the divine providence, which they termed lutf. This was a new term different from that which was used in the Qur'ānic teaching. In the Qur'ān the term lutf does not appear. God is described as laṭīf toward His creatures in the Qur'ān, but the term used for lutf -- grace -- in the Qur'ānic passages is faḍl. It still remains an unanswered question as to what led the mutakallimūn to use the term lutf and not faḍl or tafaḍḍul in their concept of divine grace.

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The basic points on which the Mu^{c}tazilites have focused in their exposition of lutf appear to be the following:

(a) Good and evil are rational categories which can be known through reason, independently of revelation. God created man's intellect in such a way that it is capable of perceiving good and evil objectively. It is at this point that God made it incumbent upon Himself to bestow that which would draw man close to good and keep him away from evil, and this is lutf.

(b) Their views on taklīf and the Justice of God necessarily include discussion on lutf. They maintain that as long as God has imposed taklīf on man, He should also make it possible for him to discharge his obligations. In other words, He should remove any obstacles which might prevent him from carrying out an injunction. This "enabling" would cause man to draw close to the act leading to obedience. This is one kind of lutf which enables a person to perform that which is obligatory on him.

(c) All God's actions are based on wisdom, thus it is inconceivable that God would act futilely. This necessitates that in all His actions there must be benefit (al-salāh) because a wise person does not act in vain, and God is the

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Wise (al-ḥakīm). Thus God, for instance, does not impose on anyone beyond his capacity and then also He does not impose taklīf except when a person has attained intellectual maturity and has the power to perform that particular task. Therefore, taklīf is beneficial accruing to the person who performs taklīf, and the notion of the reward is beneficial, because it would increase obedience in man and prevent him from being disobedient. Consequently, no action of God is void of ṣalāḥ and luṭf.

Luṭf then, in the terminology of the mutakallimūn of the Muᶜtazilah is the act which draws man to do what is obligatory on him and refrain from doing evil. In other words, luṭf is that by which a mukallaf draws closer to obedience and refrains from disobedience in the sense that he is not forced into submission, which is compulsion.[46] Al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār in his exposition of luṭf says that sometimes luṭf is termed tawfīq (divine aid) and sometimes ᶜiṣmah. But he differentiates between these terms and luṭf, saying that the term tawfīq is used to indicate the grace to choose obedience but not that which is evil or mubāḥ (actions which are classified as "indifferent", i.e., for which neither reward nor punishment is to be expected, but which are permissible);[47] ᶜiṣmah is a power preventing the

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committing of the evil.[48] But lutf is not described as /inspiring with the motivation of/ withholding; it is "calling" a person to choose the obligatory and recommended deeds.[49]

The Imāmites defined lutf as that divine act by which a mukallaf advances toward a deed leading to obedience and refrains from disobedience; and in attaining this there is no part of enabling (tamkīn) by means of ālah, since if the tool had any part in the enablement then it is not lutf. Lutf does not reach a degree of compulsion in the sense that a person endowed with lutf is not forced to submission, which is compulsion. Compulsion nullifies taklīf which exposes a person to al-thawāb, and if lutf were to reach a degree of compulsion then it would nullify taklīf, which it does not do. Lutf intimates a mukallaf to the obedience of God by his own free will. It is the result which is attained at the time of obedience rendered to the Mukallif voluntarily; and had it not been for this lutf a mukallaf would not have obeyed although being in his power to obey or to disobey. This is contrary to taklīf which enables a person to obey and without which one cannot obey or disobey. Thus lutf is something additional to taklīf, and it is this lutf

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which is incumbent upon God to bestow, because if God knows that the mukallaf will not obey except by means of luṭf and if He imposes taklīf without it, then the purpose in creation is invalidated.[50] This basic explanation of luṭf is vital for understanding its relationship to the Imāmate.

In elucidating the governing principles (aḥkām) of luṭf mentioned in brief by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, al-Ḥillī says:

First, there must be affinity (munāsabah) between luṭf and the object on which luṭf is bestowed (al-malṭūf fīhi), in the sense that the occurrence of luṭf, is a necessary cause to the attainment of the status of al-malṭūf. For instance, the obligation of prayer is luṭf in relation to the act of prayer alone, which becomes al-malṭūf. The same occurrence of luṭf does not extend, for instance, to the giving of alms (al-zakāt). If this affinity between luṭf and al-malṭūf had not been made a governing principle of luṭf, then the effect of luṭf in this instance would have been other than the act of prayer, since luṭf is the cause and al-malṭūf is the effect. Similarly, the obligation of almsgiving requires the occurrence of a further act of luṭf in order to produce the actual act of almsgiving. For example, burning might be an effect more appropriate to water than to fire; and cold might be a cause more appropriate to burning than fire would be.[51]

Second, luṭf must not reach degree of compulsion.

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In other words, in calling a mukallaf toward al-maltūf (e.g., praying), luṭf must not become compulsion because luṭf does not force but rather induces toward obedience. An action done under compulsion has one thing in common with luṭf, in that they both call a person to an action, but the theologians do not term the former luṭf.[52]

Third, it is necessary that the mukallaf should have knowledge of the existence of luṭf; it does not matter whether this knowledge, which he has, is summary (ijmāl) or detailed (bi'l-tafṣīl). Without such knowledge, and the knowledge of the thing on which luṭf is bestowed and the affinity between them, luṭf cannot call a mukallaf to a deed on which luṭf has been bestowed.

Fourth, luṭf is higher than mere 'goodness' (ḥusn), for the following reason: luṭf can be either wājib, such as ritual prayers, fasting and so on, or mandūb (recommended), such as works of supererogation (al-nawāfil); in the latter case luṭf is obviously more exalted than ḥusn, which does not include actions which are either incumbent or recommended.

Fifth, luṭf is subject to choice in the sense that it is not necessary that it should be specific (muᶜayyan), rather it is permissible that choice of the obligation to do the act be incorporated in luṭf. For instance, each one of the two actions made obligatory can take the place of the other, as it happens in the case of expiation (kaffārah)[53] for neglected

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religious duties. In other words, one kind of luṭf may take the place of another kind for a required purpose.[54]

Luṭf is more evident in the matters pertaining to al-taklīf al-samᶜī and the institution of guidance of mankind through prophets and imāms is the manifestation of this divine grace. It is through the bestowal of this kind of luṭf that God has enabled man to draw closer to obedience and refrain from disobedience. One of the governing principles of luṭf, as mentioned above, is that a mukallaf should have the knowledge of the existence of luṭf, since without such knowledge the mukallaf cannot advance toward the eternal reward. Therefore, there is a need for another luṭf which should call a mukallaf to obedience. This other luṭf is the Prophecy and the Imāmate.

There are two kinds of luṭf, al-ᶜāmm (general) and al-khāṣṣ (particular). Al-luṭf al-ᶜāmm is the Imāmah and al-khāṣṣ is the Nubuwwah; the reason for this classification, according to al-Ḥillī, is that there is a possibility that for a certain period there may be no living prophet; but there is an Imām present at all times.[55] One who rejects al-luṭf al-ᶜāmm is more wicked than one who rejects al-luṭf al-khāṣṣ.[56] This classification and assertion of al-Ḥillī is of much later origin than that of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, who divides luṭf under the same two headings but with a different implication. According to him, ṣalāt, since it

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is incumbent on everybody and since there is a possibility of performing it, constitutes al-lutf al-ᶜāmm, in the sense that it involves all the mukallafūn. But ṣalāt as a particular taklīf is al-lutf al-khāṣṣ, since it concerns only that mukallaf for whom it is a particular obligation.[57] Although this classification of lutf would seem to apply rather to fiqh as it came to be understood after the early Islamic period, it is relevant to the theological doctrine of the Imāmate also, because the category of wājibāt which is exemplified here as ṣalāt, also includes Imāmah. Since Imāmah is vital in the elucidation of taklīf, which includes obligatory deeds as well as recommended ones, it is recognized as wājib al-ᶜayn (specifically incumbent) by the Imāmites and hence becomes al-lutf al-ᶜāmm. In this sense Imāmah as al-lutf al-ᶜāmm involves the total taklīf and its relationship to the mukallaf. But the taklīf of Imāmah on the Imām himself, whose task is to draw man close to obedience and further from disobedience, becomes al-lutf al-khāṣṣ, denoting the duty of Imāmah for a particular individual, analogous to the obligation of ṣalāt on a particular mukallaf, which was classified as al-lutf al-khāṣṣ.[58]

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, also implicitly, divides lutf into two kinds. Al-lutf al-ᶜāmm, according to him, is the one which is bestowed on all mukallafūn to enable them to perform the taklīf. But there is also another kind of lutf, which

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is specially conferred on prophets and their rightful successors. By this type of lutf, a prophet is enabled to abstain from wicked deeds and perform those which are made obligatory on him, and to remain within the boundaries (hudūd) set by God. This special favour to prophets is meant to attract people toward them. This lutf is called ᶜiṣmah.[59] Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī adds that since the function of a prophet or an Imām is to prevent people from committing wicked deeds and to protect the Sharīᶜah, which has been sent to make the mukallafūn abstain from that which is prohibited and advance them towards obedience, this is lutf which is extended to all (al-ᶜāmm); ᶜiṣmah, on the other hand, is the lutf for the Imām in particular (al-khāss), because the function of the Imāmate requires him to be infallible in order to be effective in his guidance of those who are fallible.[60]

Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, in one place in his al-Shāfī, advances a somewhat similar view of the function of lutf, which implies that a ra'īs[61] who is endowed with lutf is enabled to restrain the oppressor from oppression, and the unjust man from his injustice, and to avenge the oppressed, and along with that to lead them to rational principles and religious duties, and to restrain them from corrupt deeds which cause the destruction of order in their worldly affairs. It is for this reason that there is need for

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such a ra'īs, whose existence is luṭf in itself. There is, at all times, need for this ra'īs, regardless of the number of the ra'īses and of the quality of ra'īs which form another principle for consideration. The principle of luṭf, says al-Murtaḍā, simply states that there should be an Imām and that is all.[62]

It should be noted here that the classification of luṭf in terms of early Islamic fiqh also included "the whole speculative side of theology and canon law."[63] The best exposition of luṭf in Imāmite fiqh appears in al-Tamhīd fī al-Uṣūl[64] of Ṭūsī, who was the ardent supporter of this principle in all phases of Imāmite dogmatics as well as fiqh. His views on the role of ijmāᶜ are also greatly dependent on this principle, which will be discussed below. Luṭf, says Ṭūsī, can be described as ṣalāḥ (advantage) and aṣlaḥ (that which is more salutary) when applied to the religious injunctions, for the reason that ṣalāḥ is piety (tuqaⁿ) or anything that leads a person toward it. This is attainable in luṭf. This kind of luṭf should always precede a thing which has been blessed with it (malṭūf), because luṭf is the "caller" (daᶜī) which should exist prior to the performance of the deed.[65] Thus there are two kinds of luṭf.

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One occurs after the taklīf is imposed; this kind is wājib, because it enables a person to perform the taklīf. The other kind occurs simultaneously with the taklīf; this is not described as wājib, since in cases in which taklīf is imposed compulsion is involved, and there cannot be any other wājib preceding taklīf.[66]

The interpretation that luṭf is the Imām, necessitated the conclusion that it was incumbent upon God to appoint an Imām at all times. The Ashᶜarites, who did not consider luṭf to be incumbent upon God, refuted the Imāmite stand by saying that luṭf was incumbent only when the Imām was manifest (ẓāhir) and dominant (qāhir), while the Imāmites did not consider this to be necessary. Therefore, that which the Imāmites considered to be luṭf was not luṭf.[67] On the other hand, the Muᶜtazilites, for example al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār, who regarded the Imām more as a ruler,[68] did not consider that the principle of luṭf proved the obligatory necessity of the Imāmate on God.

The Ashᶜarites also refuted the argument, based on maṣlaḥah (general good),[69] which the Imāmites brought forward in support of their statement that since the Imām was the luṭf of God, it was incumbent upon Him to appoint him. They argued that luṭf could be considered wājib when it

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was void of evil aspects, and that maṣlaḥah alone was not sufficient to render it wājib. Since we do not have knowledge of evil aspects, say the Ashᶜarites, it is not permissible to consider it wājib. To this the Imāmites replied that the evil aspects had already been explained by the Religious Law, thus the problem of not having knowledge of them did not arise. The Ashᶜarites then raised another objection which argued as follows: A non-believer (kāfir) is made to follow taklīf either by the help of luṭf or without it. The first premise was false, they said, because if it were accepted that a person endowed with luṭf was under its effect, then how could he still remain a non-believer? The second premise was also false, because the non-existence of luṭf might either require the conclusion that God had no power to bring it into existence, which would render Him imperfect; or, that He could but did not do so. This would mean that God had failed to do that which was incumbent.[70]

The Imāmites replied that luṭf did not guarantee that a person favoured with it would not commit sin; rather the bestowal of luṭf itself was luṭf, which created potentialities in its recipient by drawing him closer to that which was of greater weight and having great preponderance (murajjaḥ). The non-believer who did not accept guidance

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even after having been blessed with lutf remained so because there were some other forces at work which were obstructing the effectiveness of lutf; these obstructing forces were his evil actions and unbelief, and were of his own choice. The kind of lutf with which he was blessed was in the form of knowledge of the Mukallif (i.e. God), and of the reward accruing from obedience to Him and the punishment resulting from disobedience to Him.[71]

The Ashᶜarites, according to al-Ḥillī's report, then went a step further in refutation of the doctrine that the Imām was the lutf of God. This time their objection concerned one of their basic tenets about al-fiᶜl -- action. They argued that informing a person that he would be among the people of Paradise or the Fire is a cause of corruption (mafsadah) because it will instigate (ighrā') them to do evil. God's informing a person in this manner, they said, was not compatible with lutf because, if a person was already informed whether his destination was Paradise or the Fire, lutf became unnecessary.

The Imāmites replied that informing a person that he would be among the dwellers of Paradise did not instigate him to take steps to do evil since he had already attained lutf. Nor is informing a person about his going to the

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Fire corruption either, because this informing could apply to the case of an ignorant person who did not know whether God was speaking the truth. For instance, Abū Lahab (the Prophet's uncle), as mentioned in the Qur'ān, because of his ignorance about the truthfulness of God's promise, persisted in unbelief, and was thus informed of his going to the Fire. Alternatively, it could apply to the case of a person who knew about the truthfulness of God's promise. For example, Iblīs (Satan) persisted in non-belief although being aware that by such persistence God's punishment would be even more severe. So, in neither case, they said, did God's informing a person become a cause of corruption invalidating lutf.[72]

The Imāmites having established that the Imām was the lutf of God, had then to deal with the question of whether this lutf was in the existence of the Imām himself or in his discretionary control (taṣarruf) over command and interdiction.[73] The Imāmites maintained that the Imām was lutf both in his existence and his discretionary control.[74] But his taṣarruf was dependent on three conditions and it was only if these conditions were met that the Imāmate could work to the advantage of the ummah.[75] The first condition concerned God; that is to say, He was responsible for

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creating an Imām and consolidating him with power, knowledge, and the means by which he could carry out that which had been entrusted to him. It was incumbent upon God to designate him and require him to undertake the charge of the ummah. The second condition concerned the Imām, who should accept the taklīf and shoulder the burden of the Imāmate and take upon himself the accomplishment of its functions. The third condition concerned the mukallafūn (i.e. the people), who should assist and support the Imām in the performance of his duties and the removal of obstacles from his way in order to facilitate the performance of the taklīf. They should render him obedience and follow his instructions without which he could not lead them to al-thawāb. Obedience to the Imām had been made incumbent upon the mukallafūn by God and had been prescribed as a duty toward the Imām.[76]

This argument makes clear that the performance of the duties of the Imāmate was conditional on the existence of the Imām, since taklīf in regard to something that does not exist was evil when judged by rational criteria. Hence, his appointment by the will of God was the main condition; while the obligation of carrying out the duties of the Imāmate was dependent on it; and the incumbency upon his followers to aid him was conditional on both these, since obedience to the Imām was incumbent only when the Imām existed

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and performed his duties as an Imām.[77]

This leads one to the inevitable conclusion that during the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām the principle of lutf was invalidated, since there was no Imām to carry out the functions of the Imāmate. This was the principal criticism made by the Muᶜtazilites of the principle of lutf as maintained by the Imāmites. Al-Qādī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār, commenting on this principle says,

> and as for those who say there is a need for the Imām because he is lutf in the religion.... how do they permit the Imām to be in occultation from the ummah for such a long time, when his existence is lutf in the religion and when he is needed so badly?[78]

The objection raised by al-Qādī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār is found in most of the other non-Imāmite sources dealing with this subject. The entire Imāmite argument that the Imām was lutf because he could command and interdict, and impose legal punishment on those who failed to carry out his guidance, crumbles under the weight of the prolonged ghaybah of the twelfth Imām. So in the case of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām, the only way to justify his ghaybah was to offer the division of lutf as applied to this Imām. The

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luṭf applied to this Imām in particular was of two kinds. First, the very existence of the Imām was luṭf, and secondly, his taṣarruf over absolute power became another luṭf. The first luṭf was effective in the belief of the mukallafūn who, by believing in his existence are prevented from violating the Religious Law and are encouraged to perform the religious injunctions prescribed therein. They are possibly also helped by this belief to abstain from evil deeds. So this luṭf is present even when the Imām is in ghaybah. As for the other type of luṭf, namely, his taṣarruf in the affairs of the ummah, this was not possible unless he existed.[79] According to the Imāmites, those who said that because of the absence of his discretionary control he did not exist, were not in the right. The Imām, they said, did exist but, because the third condition required in the taṣarruf, namely, the need for the support and assistance to be accorded by the people, was not fulfilled, he was unable to benefit the people by his existence. Consequently, it was the mukallafūn who should be blamed for this situation which had compelled the Imām to remain in occultation.[80] Thus the luṭf of God was present to enable the people to follow taklīf. The suggestion, says al-Ḥillī, that during the ghaybah taklīf becomes evil, is incorrect. Taklīf would have become evil, if the things

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which were required to be performed as taklīf were not known. However, the majority of the injunctions were known, and for those things which were not known, there could be no taklīf -- since taklīf in regard to an unknown thing was muhāl (impossible).[81]

Al-Sharīf al-Murtadā, in his risālah on ghaybah, has summarized the Imāmite argument about the Imām being lutf even during the ghaybah as follows:

> If is is said, "What is the difference between his (the Imām's) existence when he is in the ghaybah and no one can reach him or benefit from him, and his non-existence? /Furthermore,/ would not his being rendered non-existent until the time when God knows there will be support for him from the people be as permissible as /His/ allowing concealment until that time when God knows there will be support for him from the people?"
>
> Then it should be said to those /making such objections/: "First, we consider it allowable that many of his friends and those upholding his Imāmate would reach him, and thus benefit from him; and those among them, the adherents of his Shīʿah, and believers in his Imāmate who neither reach nor meet him, they too benefit from him during the ghaybah /by that/ benefit which we say is required /in the state of/ obligation (al-taklīf). /This is/ because with their awareness of his existence among them and by their being certain about the incumbency to obey him, they will inevitably fear him and respect him /so that they would not/ commit an evil deed. They are afraid of being chastised or reprimanded by him. In this manner, the /performance of/ vile deeds will decrease among them and the good ones will increase, or, /at least/ they will be closer to

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such a thing. This then is the rational argument in support of the necessity of the Imām. Thus, even though the Imām does not appear to his enemies, because of fear from them and because they have blocked the way to benefit from him against themselves, we have, nonetheless, shown in this discourse the way his friends benefit from him in the two ways mentioned above."

In addition, here we say: "The difference between the existence of the Imām /who is in the ghaybah/ because of the fear from his enemies and who is waiting in this state for them (the people) to consolidate him so that he may appear and take command of that which God has entrusted him, and his non-existence is as clear as the daylight; because, if he was non-existent then whatever good the people relinquished, or whatever guidance they abandoned and whatever benevolence they were deprived of, would be imputed to God. /In this way/ there would be no argument against the people and no blame. But, if the Imām is present, although in concealment because of their alarming him, whatever benefits are eliminated from them, will be imputed to them. They are to be blamed for that and criticized for it."[82]

From the above discussion on the principles of luṭf and taklīf and their relationship to the doctrine of the Imāmate, it may plausibly be concluded that it was mainly to emphasize the spiritual role of guiding the ummah towards religion that the Imām without whom taklīf could not be elucidated, was to be interpreted to be the luṭf of God. But the question confronting the Imāmite theologians was whether all those who claimed to be Imāms were luṭf of God, or whether only those endowed with special marks were to be considered as luṭf. In one place, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā

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had already made it clear that the principle of luṭf was not concerned with the number of Imāms or the qualities of the Imām.[83] On the other hand, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī maintained that, in fact, it was a special kind of luṭf bestowed on the Prophet and the Imāms that made them so outstanding that people were attracted towards them, and he defines this special kind of luṭf as ᶜiṣmah -- the infallibility of the of the Ḥujaj Allāh.[84] Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī argued that since people were fallible, they needed an infallible leader to guide them towards the Sharīᶜah, which also needed to be protected by an infallible custodian. Thus it seems that it is the infallible Imām who is the luṭf of God, and not every Imām. This brings in another principle, which was used to vindicate the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām by declaring him the "only infallible Imām of the Age".

The Principle of ᶜiṣmah and the Twelfth Imām

The Imāmīte theologians, in sustaining the doctrine of the ᶜiṣmah of the Prophet and the Imāms, begin by discussing the purpose of prophethood (al-nubuwwah). Prophets, they maintain, are sent with a mission to guide mankind towards attaining al-thawāb by elucidating to them His requirements (of them) -- taklīf. In this capacity, they

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are the leaders of the people among whom they are appointed to carry out the duty of prophethood. The purpose of al-nubuwwah could be defeated if the people to whom they are sent thought it permissible for the prophet to commit sins and tell lies, because then they would also think the same about their teachings and their commands and interdictions. As a consequence, they would not follow them and would not be able to attain reward. Furthermore, obedience to them is made incumbent by God, and if they sin then men by following them would also necessarily be guilty of sin; this is not possible, because God cannot command man to do evil, nor can He make obedience to such a person incumbent.[85] Finally, if the prophet sins, it will be incumbent on his followers to stop him from doing that, since amr and nahy is incumbent on every mukallaf. This would cause a harmful act (idhā') and the goal of prophethood would not be achieved. It is for these reasons, they hold, that the purpose of sending a prophet is dependent on his ᶜismah;[86] unless he is infallible, the confidence which is required in prophethood cannot be attained.[87] So al-Mufid defines ᶜismah as: "al-tawfīq, al-lutf, and al-iᶜtisām for the hujaj from God against sinning and committing errors in the religion of God."[88]

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As discussed in Chapter II, the use of the term hujjah in Imāmite dogmatics includes both the Prophet and the Imāms, who are all considered to have been divinely appointed, rightly guided (al-hudāt al-muhtadūn) leaders of the ummah. As a result, the principle of the necessity of ᶜiṣmah in the prophet is also extended to include the Imāms, who being upheld as the rightful successors of the prophetic mission were required to be infallible from the time they matured intellectually (mundhu akmala ᶜuqūluhum) to the end of their mission on earth.[89] In justifying ᶜiṣmah, stress was laid on the protection of the Religious Law which could be accorded only by an infallible leader.[90]

A slight digression is needed here in order to explain why the Imāmites attached such importance to this principle and why they made it a condition for the success of prophethood and the Imāmate. The doctrine of ᶜiṣmah seems to be Shiᶜite in origin, that is to say, from the very early days of Islam, it was a group sympathetic to the claims of the Banū Hāshim in general and of the Ahl al-Bayt in particular, which propounded and looked forward to the leadership of a perfect man, and was always eager to attribute such heightened characteristics to their leaders among the Banū Hāshim.[91] A careful study of the evolution of this

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doctrine reveals that, as the Imāmites moved away from the period of their Imāms, the doctrine of ᶜiṣmah was redefined on even more precise lines than before. The classic example is that offered by Ibn Bābūyah (d. 992), who represents the view of the Imāmite traditionists. On the question of ᶜiṣmah, he affirmed that the prophets and Imāms, though infallible as far as both grave sins (kabā'ir) and minor sins (ṣaghā'ir) were concerned, were liable to inadvertance (sahw), which God might induce in them in order to remind mankind that they were merely human beings.[92] His opinion was modified by al-Mufīd (d. 1022) who held that the Prophet and the Imāms, being the ḥujjah from God, were endowed with ᶜiṣmah from the time they matured intellectually until they died.[93] They were not liable to inadvertance in anything concerning religion or to forgetfulness concerning any of the injunctions (al-aḥkām), because they were appointed to protect the Religious Law and take people to task if they failed to observe them.[94] The stress laid on the role of an Imām as the protector of the religion, and therefore the requirement of ᶜiṣmah, was a new development in support of ᶜiṣmah. It may be compared, for example, with a quite early reason for the ᶜiṣmah of the Imām propounded by

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al-Nuᶜmānī (fl. 3rd/10th). He says simply:

> He is maᶜṣūm (infallible), confirmed (mu'ayyad), divinely aided (muwaffaq) and guided (musaddad); he is protected from imperfection (khalal), error (zalal), obstinacy (ᶜinād) and idle talk (khaṭal). He has been endowed with these because he is His ḥujjah to His servants, and His witness to His creatures; and this is the grace (faḍl) of God.[95]

So ᶜiṣmah as understood by al-Nuᶜmānī was without the theological complexities which evolved with the central doctrine of the Imāmate. From the simple grace of God, ᶜiṣmah evolved to become the luṭf of God and one of the basic requirements in the Imām, which could be known only through explicit designation (naṣṣ) from God.[96]

ᶜIṣmah, the Imāmites believe, cannot be known externally with the help of the sense (al-ḥiss)[97] or by perceiving the outward natural disposition, since it is the psychic power (al-malakūt al-nafsāniyyah) possessed by the prophets and the Imāms[98] after they have received the waḥy and have been designated as Imāms respectively; according to al-Ḥillī, it is the luṭf of God to the prophets and the Imāms so that they may not have the motivation to forsake obedience and to commit sin, although they have the power to do so.[99] ᶜIṣmah can be known only by God, who has the knowledge of hidden things, and it is He who can direct men towards the

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knowledge of such a thing. This "direction" of His is naṣṣ (designation) through His prophet.[100] Therefore, it is only God who can designate an infallible Imām.[101] After the Prophet it can only be another maᶜṣūm, and he is the only one who knows his rightful successor.[102] Any person other than an infallible Imām claiming this prerogative needs another person who as his Imām must be infallible. This is so because, as al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā argues, if we accept a leader with the possibility of being fallible, the needs of society are not fulfilled and a leader is needed above that fallible leader who himself should be infallible. If he is again fallible another infallible person would be needed by him and so on. This would necessitate either belief in an unlimited number of Imāms which is impossible, or the belief in an Imām from whom the reason for this necessity has been removed.[103] Thus ᶜiṣmah can be known only through a clear naṣṣ, and only a maᶜṣūm can take place of a maᶜṣūm.[104] With the establishment of the principle of ᶜiṣmah and its relationship with naṣṣ "there remains no alternative," says al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, "but to maintain that it is the Master of the Age (Ṣāḥib al-Zamān), who conforms to this, and he is in ghaybah."[105]

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By substantiating the view that it was only the son of Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī who was the maᶜṣūm, the ghaybah of the infallible Imām became even more difficult to justify. Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā undertook to vindicate the Imāmate of the infallible Imām in ghaybah by comparing the explanation of the ghaybah with that of the ambiguous (mutashābih) verses of the Qur'ān, no rationally-arrived-at reason for which could be offered. In such cases, one had to trust the wisdom of God, who called upon the twelfth Imām to go into occultation for some reason equally unknown. The acquiring of the knowledge of this reason "has not been imposed upon us as a duty."[106] The plausible reason for the ghaybah of the Imām, in spite of his being infallible, according to al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, is

> fear of his being harmed by the oppressive people, and their obstructing his hand from discretionary control over that which has been meant to be his right upon which to exercise discretionary control. /This is/ because one attains total benefit from the Imām when he is firmly established and obeyed /by the people/ and when there is no obstruction between him and his goals, so as to enable him to lead troops, fight the oppressors, administer legal punishment (ḥadd), defend the boundaries, see that justice is done to the oppressed.[107]

This emphasis on the infallibility of the Imām requires an explanation of the role of the maᶜṣūm in reaching ijmāᶜ in the Imāmite legal system. If ijmāᶜ is reached

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without an infallible Imām's participation (dukhūl) as one of the members of the group who have come together to reach a consensus, the Imāmites do not consider this as valid. The validity of ijmāᶜ is ensured only by the participation of al-Imām al-maᶜsūm.[108] This was the way, it seems, the Imāmites sought to invalidate the principle of ijmāᶜ as maintained by the Sunnites, and which was the main basis for validating the caliphate of Abū Bakr, after the death of the Prophet.[109]

The Principle of ijmāᶜ and the Twelfth Imām

The Imāmites consider discussion on the principle of ijmāᶜ as indispensible for an understanding of the function of the twelfth Imām during the ghaybah, especially when differences of opinion concerning a single problem are likely to arise; and the fuqahā', since they are not endowed with ᶜismah, in order to ensure a right solution to an important problem, feel the need for an infallible Imām even more.

An opinion arrived at by ijmāᶜ, according to the Imāmites, in order to become an authoritative source of the Religious Law, must bring to light the utterance of the infallible Imām. It is only when the utterance of the infallible Imām is revealed with certainty that the consensus becomes authoritative; and it is that which is revealed in

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the form of consensus that becomes authoritative and not the person who reveals the utterance. The infallibility of the ummah as maintained by the Sunnites (so the Imāmites assert) cannot be substantiated. It is far-fetched to think that the ummah would discover and agree upon an opinion of the one who is endowed with infallibility, such as the Imām. The reason for this contention is that the infallibility in regard to ijmā^{c} is to be ascertained in the opinion which has been revealed and not in the person of the one who revealed it. In this sense then a statement arrived at by ijmā^{c} is similar in status to the tradition reported in an unbroken line (al-mutawātir), meaning undoubted, which was handed down by numerous chains of narrators on the authority of the infallible Imām; and just as such a tradition is not in itself directly a proof for the enactment of a religious injunction but rather an evidence of the proof for the injunction, so is ijmā^{c} in its function, which is not a proof in itself but an evidence for the proof. Nevertheless, there is one basic difference between al-mutawātir tradition and ijmā^{c}: the former is the verbal proof of the utterance of the infallible Imām; that is, it demonstrates the exact wording of the Imām handed down by very many distinct chains of narrators; the latter is a definite proof of an opinion of the infallible Imām itself and not a proof of the

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particular wording of what had been uttered by him, because it is not proved that the Imām uttered particular words in explaining a particular injunction.[110]

Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864-65), a leading Imāmite theologian of the later Qājār period, has summarized the extent definitions of ijmāᶜ as follows:

(1) According to Shaykh Ṭusi, he says, ijmāᶜ is the agreement (ittifāq) of ahl al-ḥall wa al-ᶜaqd[111] in the ummah.

(2) According to Rukn al-Dīn Jurjānī, a contemporary of Shaykh al-Anṣārī, it is the agreement of the ummah in such a way that it should include the opinion of the infallible Imām.

(3) Al-Shahīd al-Thānī ᶜAlī b. Aḥmad (d. 965/1557-58) defines ijmāᶜ as a special agreement of those whose opinion is estimated as authentic in the ummah, on matters concerning religious legal opinions (fatawi).[112]

(4) Shaykh al-Anṣārī himself defines it as the agreement of all the ᶜulamā' in one single period.[113] But, adds Shaykh al-Anṣārī, all the prominent Imāmite theologians like al-Mufīd, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Ṭusī and others, agree on the fact that ijmāᶜ has no value unless it includes the opinion of the infallible Imām. When ijmāᶜ becomes an

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authoritative source of the Religious Law by virtue of uncovering the opinion of the Imām, it is not necessary that all the fuqaha' without exception should agree on it, as maintained by the Sunnites; rather, it is sufficient that all those who are seeking to reveal the opinion of the Imām, regardless of their number, should agree on its being the opinion of the infallible Imām. The important thing in ijmā^{c} is to ascertain that it is the opinion of the infallible Imām.

How does one discover the opinion of the infallible Imām with certainty? Several methods have been offered by the Imāmite theologians, of which the following four are the basic ones:

(1) Tarīqat al-Hiss: (The Method of /direct/ Sensory Perception).[114]

This is also known as al-Tarīqat al-Tadammuniyyah (The Comprehensive Method). This method was known among the early generations of the Imāmite theologians. Al-Sharīf al-Murtadā and those who followed him preferred this to the other methods. This method states that: It should be definitely known that the Imām was one of those who agreed upon a consensus, without his person being revealed among them. In other words this method conceives of a person who is searching for the ijmā^{c} and who during this process

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studies the opinions of the ᶜulamā'. By this means he becomes aware of their agreement on a certain problem and discovers anonymous but distinct and known opinions. He continues in this process until he attains the cognizance that the anonymous opinion belonged to the Imām who was among those who agreed upon a consensus, without his person being revealed.

Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar, a present-day mujtahid of Najaf, commenting on this method, says that it is clear that this method was practicable for those who lived during the life-time of the Imāms or close to that period. It is difficult for those who are further removed from that period to ensure the participation and identification of the person of the Imām at the time of ijmāᶜ. What would happen, asks al-Muẓaffar, if one of the ᶜulamā' in the group opposed the opinion of an unidentified person present at that time, who might have been the Imām himself? Thus, it cannot be ascertained if the Imām was included in the ijmāᶜ, or at least not by this method. As a result, its validity as an authoritative source is questionable.[115]

(2) Ṭarīqah qāᶜidat al-luṭf (The Method based on the principle of luṭf):

This is an important method of finding out the opinion

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of al-Imām al-maᶜṣūm in ijmāᶜ. The method employs the principle of lutf which requires that there must exist an infallible Imām at all times to guide his followers to the right path. This means that he should be present to reveal the truth about any problem on which a wrong agreement may have been reached; otherwise taklīf would not be imposed in respect to that particular injunction, or, it would be a breach of what has been made incumbent on the Imām; and the purpose of his appointment, which is to teach and elucidate the revealed injunctions of religion, would be defeated.[116]

This method seeks to discover the opinion of the Imām intellectually through an agreement reached by a number of the ᶜulamā' present during one particular period or in later periods, in such a way that no impediment occurs from the direction of the Imām in any possible way, whether secretly or openly. This method was preferred by Tūsī and those who followed him. In fact, he considered this method as the only way to find the Imām's opinion in ijmāᶜ. Tūsī, in one of his writings refuted al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, who did not accept the method of lutf in discovering the opinion of the Imām, saying, "Had it not been for the principle of lutf there would have been no way of knowing the agreement (muwāfaqah) of the Imām with those who had reached a consensus

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(mujmi^{c}in)."[117]

The method of lutf is divided into two types. One is al-ijmā^{c} al-dukhūlī, which states that in the absence of the Imām, as is the case with the twelfth Imām, if a group of the ^{c}ulamā' come to an agreement on a certain solution to a problem, then it is maintained that one of those present on such occasion was the twelfth Imām himself. In this case he was dakhīl, when the agreement was reached and hence it is called al-ijmā^{c} al-dukhūlī.[118] The other kind is al-ijmā^{c} al-kashfi which states that when a group of the ^{c}ulamā' agree on a point which is not right, one of them is made to disagree with them by the lutf of the Imām; this ensures the correction of the erroneous agreement. This enables the group to discover (kashf) the right point to agree on and hence is known as al-ijmā^{c} al-kashfī.[119]

(3) Tarīqat al-Ḥads (The Method of Intellectual Intuition):[120]

This method states that on whatever decision the Imāmite ^{c}ulamā' may have agreed, it should be ascertained that it has reached them from their Imām, in an unbroken personal contact. When their final agreement is accompanied by considerable disagreement in most of the problems, then the agreement is asserted to be in reliance on the opinion of their Imām and not derived from their personal opinion

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or independent comprehension. It is necessary that this agreement should be arrived at in all ages, beginning from the periods of the Imāms to the present times, because the agreement reached in one period when taken together with a disagreement in another period impairs the attainment of the required certainty. This is the method adopted by the majority of the ʿulamā' in the modern period. Al-Muẓaffar commenting on this method says that it is not easy for the ʿulamā' to attain certainty about the agreement, nor is it possible for the fuqahā' of different periods to agree without exception.[121]

(4) Ṭarīqat al-Taqrīr (The Method of /Silent/ confirmation):

This was effected by the full knowledge of the infallible Imām who, although having power to reject their agreement by revealing the truth, would say nothing. Thus an agreement of the fuqahā' in respect to /certain injunction/ is brought to light by the affirmation of the Imām for them in what they had agreed and confirming their opinion. This confirmation is interpreted as a proof that their decision was in accordance with the command of God. This method was actually practised during the life-time of the Imāms when at times the disciples of the Imām explained an injunction with the full knowledge of the Imām and with the

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possibility of his rejecting their explanation or confirming it in silence. Al-Muzaffar, in his concluding remarks, says that during the ghaybah of the Imām there seems to be no method left for the Imāmite fuqaha' to know the opinion of the Imām with certainty and sureness.[122]

Al-Hilli asserts that although the Imāmites agree on the principle of ijmā^{c} as one of the sources of fiqh, for the purpose of validating the ijmā^{c} reached at one time, the ijmā^{c} had to include the sanction of the infallible Imām in 'every age', who is the chief of the ummah, and it is only his opinion which is the authoritative source for the imposition of taklīf.[123]

As indicated above, one of the reasons for subjecting the validity of ijmā^{c} to the presence of an infallible Imām, as far as kalām was concerned, was to invalidate the election of Abū Bakr to the caliphate. The other reason appears to be the need to answer a question frequently put to them concerning the Islamic Law, in which ijmā^{c} becomes a significant source for religious injunctions besides the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. The question was: "How does the infallible Imām in the state of ghaybah protect the Religious Law, when it is in the power of ^{c}ulamā' to agree on something that the may prove detrimental to the Religious Law?" The Imāmites contend that the lutf of God was the Imām himself and that

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he was appointed to advance the ummah towards al-thawāb, which was obtained by following taklīf. Therefore, it was the Imām who was responsible for all the solutions of religious problems which arose from time to time and which could not be solved by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. It was only his infallibility that ensured the validity of ijmā^{c}, which otherwise might be reached by individuals who might follow their personal will rather than the will of God.

Conclusion

The Imāmite mutakallimūn have discussed the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām as part of their exposition of the doctrine of the Imāmate, which inevitably raised the question of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām, and the reason for believing in his Imāmate. Relying on the asālat al-^{c}aql the mutakallimūn tried to avoid discussing those arguments which were based mainly on the asālat al-sam^{c}, such as the traditions which stated that the Imāms were twelve in number, and that they were al-Qā'im, al-Mahdī, etc.; such considerations formed the main theme of the traditionists' approach. Instead, references to the twelfth Imām and his ghaybah, which was under attack, were incorporated in the general discussion on the doctrine of the Imāmate, the necessity of Imāmate, and so on. This offers a further point in

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establishing the underlying problem which arose because of the prolonged ghaybah of al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād, who was expected to reappear in the near future and was now proclaimed as the future leader, the awaited Mahdī, justifying, at least, his religious role during the prolonged, compelled ghaybah.

The purpose of the kalām vindication of the Imāmate of the Hidden Imām was to meet the criticisms of the non-Imāmite mutakallimūn who attacked the whole doctrine of the Imāmate as propounded by the Imāmites. But the ordinary Imāmites, it seems, were satisfied with the traditionists' defence of the Imāmate and the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, which proclaimed al-Qā'im as al-Mahdī -- the promised saviour. It is plausible to suggest that it was because of this satisfaction of the ordinary believers, or, to put it differently, because of their inability to comprehend the complexities of kalām and their preferences for the traditional argument, that Tūsī's methodology is one of compromise between the two forms of the defence of the whole problem. His Kitāb al-Ghaybah, although pointing out the unreliability of the traditional argument, contains all the main points made by this dalīl as propounded by the traditionists, with an occasional introductory clause like: "the Shīᶜites say...." instead of "We say...." Tūsī did not completely discard the

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method of the traditionists, but maintained an attitude of selectivity in accepting their traditions, and supplemented the approach with the summary of the kalām arguments vindicating the Imāmate and the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām. The blending of the two aṣālahs in his approach has rendered his work, an indispensable source for an understanding of the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The present inquiry has traced the religious history of Imāmite Shi^{c}ism in order to examine the development of the idea of a messianic Imām, al-Mahdī. Historical circumstances played an important part in combining various forces to formulate the early doctrine of al-Qā'im al-Mahdī, who, it was believed, would appear at a certain time to restore the purity of Islam. In the development of this Imāmite doctrine one may distinguish three stages, each of which was indispensable to the crystallization of the idea that the twelfth Imām was al-Mahdī al-Maw^{c}ūd (the promised) of the ummah.

The first stage is that during which controversy arose regarding the succession to the Imāmate. The Imāmate was passed on to al-^{c}Askarī (d. 260/873-74), the eleventh Imām, who was acknowledged by the majority of the Imāmites to be the successor of al-Hādī (d. 254/868). Al-^{c}Askarī's successor, that is the twelfth Imām, was unknown to almost all the Imāmites. At this stage of the Imāmate of the

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twelfth Imām, he was al-Qā'im and al-Hujjah of the family of the Prophet, but neither of these functions was identified with that of the Promised Mahdī. The period referred to is the early period of Imāmite history, when the theory of the twelve Imāms, seems to have [been]not clearly formulated. The disagreement over the succession to al-ᶜAskarī was great enough to divide the Imāmites into various factions. Since the twelfth Imām was considered to be in concealment, some prominent individuals among the close associates of the tenth and eleventh Imāms took up the leadership of the Imāmites as his agents.

The second stage in the development of this doctrine is marked by these early agents of the twelfth Imām. The Imām by this time was already declared to be the Hidden (al-ghā'ib) Imām and characterized by the title of al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād (the Upholder of the holy war /against the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt/), since holy war was what he was expected to wage when he rose again after his temporary disappearance. This was the period of the Short Occultation (873-941), during which the "Qā'im of the Family of the Prophet", as his full title goes, was expected to return in the near future and put an end to a period of disintegration which had to precede the final restoration. The niyābah of the Imām, temporarily instituted by some prudent and astute

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Imāmite leaders, played a vital role in the formation of the doctrine of the ghaybah of the Imām. But the prolonged ghaybah must be accounted as the main reason for the propounding of the doctrine of the two types of ghaybah -- the Short and the Complete. The Complete Occultation which marks the end of the Short Occultation is the third stage in the development of the idea of the Imāmite Mahdī.

The main characteristic of this stage is the absence of any leadership of the Imāmites provided by the so-called 'special agents' (wukalā') of the Imām. This is the period of the ruwāt of the Imāmites, who dominated the history of the Imāmite religion during this era. In all probability, these early ruwāt appear to have combined the idea of al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād in occultation and al-Mahdī al-Mawᶜūd in the Muslim traditions attributed to the Prophet, who will appear at the end of time to bring about the final triumph of truth over falsehood when justice and equity will reign forever. The prolonged occultation of the Imām, it seems, had to be justified by proclaiming the latter as al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar (the awaited), with an increasingly metaphysical and theological emphasis.

Substantiating the doctrine of Hujjat al-Ghā'ib was to prove most difficult for the Imāmite scholars at different

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stages during the Complete Occultation. In the beginning, simple traditionist defence of the doctrine based on al-samᶜ was found effective in satisfying the belief of the Imāmites in their Hidden Imām. But with the prolongation of the ghaybah the doctrine came under attack from both the non-Imāmite Shiᶜites and the Muᶜtazilites, as well as from the Ashᶜarites. To meet the various criticisms made by these groups some Imāmite scholars undertook to vindicate the doctrine of the Hidden Imām by employing a more profound method than the one based on al-samᶜ, namely, kalām. All efforts were made to show the Imāmate of the Hidden Hujjah to be the logical outcome of the unfavourable circumstances which forced the Imām to remain in occultation although he was responsible for the spiritual guidance of the ummah.

Two points seem to have been emphasized repeatedly in both the traditionist and theological defence of the doctrine of the ghaybah: first, the spiritual leadership of the ummah could be provided only by the infallible Imām, who is the twelfth Imām; and second, this leadership during the Complete Occultation, although in an indirect way, was available through the ruwāt for the Imāmites. The first point suffered from an inherent weakness and this was the difficulty of the task, even for the Imāmites, of proving the existence of the spiritual leadership provided by

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al-Maᶜsūm al-Ghā'ib. It could be plausibly maintained that it was mainly for this reason that the entire theological defence of the doctrine of the ghaybah was evolved. The second point of emphasis was of greater consequence in later Imāmite history, when, in the absence of the twelfth Imām, his ruwāt wielded tremendous powers which were sometimes extended beyond the realm of religion.

The endeavours of the Imāmite scholars, at different times, in regard to the defence of the Imāmate and the role of the twelfth Imām as the Mahdī, albeit blended with legendary and mythical ideas, succeeded in forging a sort of spiritual link in the lives of the Imāmites who looked forward to the reappearance of their Imām. It is this belief in the future coming of the Imām as al-Mahdī, which has become nothing less than the cornerstone of the Imāmite spiritual edifice. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that without such a hope in the twelfth Imām, the Imāmite religion might not have been able to survive persecutions under different dynasties in the course of Islamic history, before it became established as the official creed of the Safavid empire at the beginning of the 16th century. The spiritual aspect of the doctrine was destined to substitute for the failure to establish temporal rule by the Imām. It reflects the hopes and visions of its believers

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for a better existence. The phenomenon of redemption through al-Mahdī has thus dominated the Imāmite outlook in the later period. Hence, in the spiritual life of the Imāmites, the prolongation of the ghaybah is interpreted as a time of travail, a period of testing and sifting of the believers, a period of disintegration which must precede the final restoration when the Imām reappears as al-Mahdī al-Mawʿūd, al-Qāʾim min āl Muhammad.

The messianic hope of the Imāmites and their aspirations to live under the rule of a perfect king, al-Mahdī, one who rules the world in justice with all spiritual power and authority, cannot be regarded as accidental, since something of its pattern appears to be indigenous to a great many cultures. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there is built into the aspirations and hopes of the human race this dream of redemption through a perfect king who will establish a rule of absolute prosperity. Consequently, it seems plausible to maintain that in the development of the Mahdī idea in the Imāmite religion various forms and aspects of this idea found in other Near Eastern societies may in their way have made some contribution to the legendary and mythical material which was incorporated in the Imāmite works. It must be remarked here as a caution that, in

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traditional cultures where the cross-current of ideas seems to be a commonplace, the ideas were borrowed slowly and almost unconsciously, and were usually assimilated in the new culture in their own terminology. Thus the title Mahdī in Islam was used for the future restorer of the faith, and in the Imāmite religion came to be used for the twelfth Imām al-Qā'im, exclusively.

There remains one point to mention, and this is the significance of the Mahdī idea in Shī'ī piety, which was referred to earlier as the spiritual link in the lives of the Imāmites. The twelfth Imām embodies in his personality and mission the yearning of all the Shī'ites for a better and more prosperous existence and the assurance of the possibility of such a life through his reappearance which is being awaited with anxious anticipation. The period of the Complete Occultation must come to an end to be followed by a period of peace, prosperity, and the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood when justice and equity will reign forever. The Prophet is reported to have said:

> If there remains only a day of this world, God will prolong that day until a male descendant of mine, whose name shall be my name and whose kunya (patronym) will be my kunya. He shall fill the earth with justice and equity as it has been filled with oppression and wickedness.[1]

The idea of al-Mahdī has, as a result, enabled the

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Imāmites to give full rein to their hagiographical imagination. In many cases, some of the traditions concerning the birth of the Imāmite Mahdī and his reappearance reflect Shī^{c}ī piety, its hopes, disappointments and aspirations for a prosperous future. Such traditions were either excluded or given new interpretation by later Imāmite scholars who were sometimes embarrassed by the existence of such material and, perhaps were overly concerned with the question of authenticity and the theological acceptability of this material. In their desire to make this material theologically acceptable, they sometimes overlooked the true nature of the phenomenon of the future saviour, which was to strengthen men's faith in the reappearance of the twelfth Imām as the Promised Mahdī. For the believers in the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām, neither his ghaybah nor the delay in his reappearance as the only true Mahdī, seemed unusual. Even the limitation of the number of the Imāms to twelve is taken to be normative as the number of the legatees (awsiyā') of all the major prophets, who also had a period of occultation, and their followers a period of trial culminating in the final triumph and establishment of justice.[2] In Shī^{c}ī piety, the role assigned to al-Mahdī descended from al-Husayn b. ^{c}Alī, at the end of human history, is the fulfilment of the mission of all these great prophets.[3] Al-Mahdī

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is expected to be the victorious Imām and to establish the rights of the family of the Prophet. All the Imāms at different times were expected by their followers to be al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād and to wipe out the rule of oppressive caliphs, and the Imāms sometimes had difficulties in pacifying their radical followers by telling them that the Master of the Sword (Sāhib al-Sayf) was the one who would come in the future. It is in such reports that one can trace the increasingly theological and eschatological references to the twelfth Imām. Thus his birth, the ghaybah, the reason for his ghaybah, and the time when he would appear were beyond the comprehension of any man, and it was even unlawful for the Shi'ites to speculate about such things. In the early period of the occultation it was prohibited even to enquire about his name, and he was to be addressed by his titles al-Qā'im, al-Hujjah, Baqiyyat Allāh and later on, as this thesis has endeavoured to show, by the title al-Mahdī.

When gradually the doctrine of the future appearance of al-Mahdī was formulated in a definitive manner and the Shi'ites referred to the twelfth Imām as the only Mahdī, various signs of the reappearance of the Imām began to be circulated of which the universal disintegration of the world was freqently reported. There will be total chaos

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and degeneration, political turmoil, immorality and complete disregard for the principles of religion, accompanied by various manifestations of natural catastrophe.[4] The Mahdī will then reappear and save the whole of humanity and the entire creation from degeneration. Thus he will consummate not only the mission of the last Prophet Muhammad and his rightful successors, the Rāshidūn and the Mahdiyūn, but that of all prophets before him. The Shīʿī pious literature is full of descriptions of the last days, the rule of the Mahdī and the era of absolute prosperity which will obtain until the final resurrection takes place and the cycle of creation is completed. Al-Mahdī will thus accomplish the return of creation to its original purity. The Imāmite aspirations are best voiced in the following lines composed by the Shīʿī poet Diʿbil b. ʿAlī al-Khuzāʿī (b. 148/765-66):

> Were it not for him, who I hope will come
> today or tomorrow, my sighing for them
> could cut my heart.
>
> No doubt an Imām will rise -- an Imām
> who will govern according to the name
> of God and the Blessings.
>
> He will distinguish the false and the truthful
> among us; he will requite with favours
> and punishments.[5]

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Chapter 1

FOOTNOTES

[1]In recent years, the whole subject has been reconsidered in the light of comparative religion. Some writers are of the opinion that Jewish Messianic hope, which is considered to be the original source of the messianic idea, is not a new development in the Prophetic and Exile periods, but that it goes back to a far earlier age and is really not specifically Jewish at all. They argue that the hope of a semi-divine Deliverer was a common possession of the ancient world, especially in Egypt and Babylonia. See article "Messiah" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, VIII (1921), p. 510.

[2]hidāyah and huda^{n} are identical in meaning except that in the usage of the Qur'ān huda^{n} usually implies 'guidance' regarding the Book (al-kitāb) and the religious injunctions (al-Sharī^{c}ah). See for example, the Qur'ān II:2, XX:123 (al-Ṭurayḥī, Fakhr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad ^{c}Alī, Majma^{c} al-Baḥrayn I /Najaf, 1959/, p. 472). Hidāyah is more general in meaning and includes guidance in all matters. It is used in the sense of ^{c}arrafa meaning 'to apprise'. This form is not used in the Qur'ān but was common in the Ḥijāz (al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-^{c}Arūs X /Kuwayt, 1969/, p. 406).

[3]al-Baydāwī, ^{c}Abd Allāh b. ^{c}Umar, Anwār al-Tanzīl I (Cairo, 1949), p. 5; Ṭūsī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, Tafsīr al-Tibyān I (Najaf, 1957), p. 40f; Kashani, Mullā Fatḥ Allāh, Minhāj al-Ṣādiqīn (Tehrān, 1347), p. 50f; ^{c}Abduh, Muḥammad, al-Manār (Cairo, 1373), p. 63f. For Ṣufī exegesis see Sulṭān ^{c}Alī Shāh, Bayān al-Sa^{c}ādah (Lith. Tehrān, 1314), p. 18f.

[4]See above fn. 2.

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[5]See all the references cited in fn. 3 which state: "fī maᶜni'l-hidāyati lughatᵘⁿ man annahā'l-dalālatu bi-luṭfⁱⁿ ᶜalā mā yūṣalū ilā'l-maṭlūb".

[6]The term appears four times in the Qur'ān: VII:178, XVII:97, XVIII:17, LVII:26.

[7]al-Siḥāḥ: They are the six collections of traditions which are recognized by the Sunnites as authoritative. The collections are by: 1. al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), 2. Muslim (d. 261/875), 3. Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888), 4. al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), 5. al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), and 6. Ibn Mājā (d. 273/886). These works are usually called briefly al-Siḥāḥ al-Sittah, i.e. the six reliable collections. Out of the six, the collections by al-Bukhārī and Muslim were held in particular high esteem. They are sometimes referred to al-Ṣaḥīḥān (the two Ṣaḥīḥs).

[8]Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Mahdī, Bāb 5 (Cairo, 1292).

[9]Hassān b. Thābit, Dīwān, ed. Walid ᶜArafat, I (London, 1971), p. 269.

[10]Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh Vol. II (Cairo, 1960), p. 534; Masᶜūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab Vol. V, ed. Barbier de Meynard (Paris, 1891), p. 180.

[11]Ibn Saᶜd, Ṭabaqāt Vol. VII (Leiden, 1323/1905-6), p. 245.

[12]Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 546; Snouck Hurgronje, Der Mahdi, Verspreide Geschriften I (Bonn, 1923), p. 150 suggests that the epithet Mahdī may have been used in a purely honorific and political sense to describe ᶜAlī and his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

[13]ᶜilm: This term in this anecdote and in many Shiᶜī traditions refers to esoteric knowledge. See for example, al-Kulaynī, Muḥammad b. Yaᶜqūb, al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfī, Kitāb al-Ḥujjah (Tehrān, 1392) /4th ed. with Majlisī's commentary/).

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I/456, Ḥadīth I. Cited hereafter as al-Kafi (In Brockelmann, Carl, Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, 2nd rev. ed. 1/540 and Supplement I/320 Kulaynī is spelled Kulini. However, the Imāmite scholars generally spell it with a fatḥah, i.e. Kulaynī relating the author to his native town in Iran, Kulayn. See for instance the discussion of this in the latest edition of al-Kāfī ed. Najm al-Dīn al-Āmulī, with introduction and notes by ᶜAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī /Tehrān, 1388 A.H./, p. 3). See also I/463, Ḥadīth I. The Imāms were asserted to have inherited this type of knowledge from the Prophet and ᶜAlī (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., p. 491, H. 3). In the case of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah, the Kaysāniyyah regarded him as ᶜAlī's successor and heir of his esoteric knowledge, a point on which this sect lays great stress. Kaysān, the founder of the Kaysāniyyah according to one report was a mawlā of ᶜAlī, or of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah in the esoteric knowledge (al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, ed. al-Wakīl /Cairo, 1968/, I/236). Cited hereafter as al-Milal.

[14]Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., VII/77.

[15]al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, I/494.

[16]al-Mufīd, Muḥammad b. Nuᶜmān, al-Irshād (Tehrān, 1351 Shamsī), p. 415 has the same report, which reads ukhidhtu. This would render the sentence: "If I do not do so I may be arrested."

[17]Leiden text of Ta'rīkh reads manāsik which means rituals during the ḥajj, but the Cairo edition seems to give the proper meaning to the sentence and nuzur and manāk seem to follow the sense implied therein.

[18]According to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Muᶜjam al-Buldān Vol. IV (Beirut, 1957), p. 122 ᶜUsfān was a place between Juḥfah and Makkah.

[19]Ṭabarī, op. cit., VII/278-79.

[20]Ibn Saᶜd, Ṭabaqāt, VII, pt. II, p. 189.

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[21] Ibid., p. 189.

[22] Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Musnad Vol. II (Cairo, 1313), p. 195.

[23] Ibn Ḥajar, Aḥmad b. ᶜAlī, al-Isābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah (4 Vols. Cairo, 1358/1939), No. 3669.

[24] Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., II, pt. I, p. 125; VII, pt. II, p. 189. Ibn Ḥajar, op. cit., II, 162, 192, 207, 215.

[25] Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., IV, pt. II, p. 9.

[26] Ṭabarī, op. cit., VI, p. 3320; see also Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., III, pt. I, p. 180.

[27] al-Kunjī al-Shāfiᶜī, al-Bayān fī Akhbār Ṣāḥib al-Zamān, included in his Kifāyat al-Ṭālib (Najaf, 1970), p. 513.

[28] Ṭusī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah (Najaf, 1385), p. 114.

[29] Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., VII, p. 76.

[30] Ṭabarī, op. cit., IV/434; Masᶜūdī, Murūj, V, p. 181.

[31] Ibn Saᶜd, op. cit., V, p. 73 and 78.

[32] Masᶜūdī, op. cit., V, p. 181.

[33] al-Baghdādī, ᶜAbd al-Qāhir, al-Farq bayn l-Firaq (Cairo, 1964), p. 23 (hereafter referred as al-Farq); al-Ashᶜarī, Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn I (Cairo, 1949), p. 95 (hereafter referred as Maqālāt); Masᶜūdī, Murūj, V, 179f. al-Kaysāniyyah: various explanations have been suggested for this name in the books on Milal. According to al-Shahrastānī Kaysān was a mawlā of ᶜAlī b. Abū Ṭālib or of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah (al-Milal, p. I/236) and it was Kaysān who induced al-Mukhtār to seek revenge for al-Ḥusayn's blood and pointed out to him his murderers (al-Kashshī, Ikhtiyār Maᶜrifat

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al-Rijāl /Mashhad, 1348 Sh./, p. 204 /hereafter referred to as Ikhtiyār/). Al-Nawbakhtī asserts al-Mukhtār was nicknamed Kaysān and his surname was Abū ᶜAmrah (al-Nawbakhtī, Ḥasan b. Mūsā, Firaq al-Shīᶜah, ed. Helmut Ritter /Istanbul, 1931/, p. 204. Hereafter referred to as Firaq). According to Ibn Ḥazm, Kaysān Abū ᶜAmrah was the follower (ṣāḥib) of al-Mukhtār (Ibn Ḥazm, The Heterodoxies of the Shīᶜites, trans. I. Friedlander in JAOS Vol. 28, pt. I, p. 44. Hereafter referred as Heterodoxies). This seems to be a correct explanation since according to Ṭabarī, Kaysān was the chief of al-Mukhtār's bodyguard (Ta'rīkh, II, 671). Masᶜūdī's etymology for the name also seems to be close to the facts. He says, "They were named as the Kaysāniyyah because of their attachment (iḍāfatihim) to al-Mukhtār b. Abū ᶜUbayd al-Thaqafī, whose name was Kaysān and whose surname was Abū ᶜAmrah. It was ᶜAlī b. Abū Ṭālib who named him thus.... Some of them, however, maintain that Kaysān Abū ᶜAmrah is not identical with al-Mukhtār." (Murūj, V/179f.) As pointed out above Ibn Ḥazm's explanation seems to be almost certain that the sect was named after a follower of al-Mukhtār, Kaysān Abū ᶜAmrah.

[34] al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 26; Masᶜūdī, op. cit., V, p. 182.

[35] al-Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Faraj, Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, trans. Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī Maḥallātī (Tehrān, n.d.), p. 222.

[36] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 54; al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., I/96; al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 58.

[37] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 54; Ibn Ḥazm, Heterodoxies trans. I. Friedlander, p. 59.

[38] al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 31.

[39] Ibid., p. 60.

[40] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 54; al-Iṣfahānī, op. cit., p. 222.

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[41] al-Nāwusiyyah: The etymology suggested for this name is that the sect was headed by a person named ᶜAjlān b. Nāwūs from Basrah (al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., I/97; al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., 57; Ibn Ḥazm, op. cit., p. 44). al-Shahrastānī is in doubt as to whether this name is derived from a man named Nāwūs or a place Nāwūsā (al-Milal, I/273).

[42] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 57; al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., I/97.

[43] al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 63, al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 67.

[44] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 67-71.

[45] Ibid., p. 57.

[46] al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., I/98.

[47] This word appears once in the Qur'ān, XL:41, which says, "O my people, How is it that I invite you unto salvation (najāt) and you call me unto fire?"

[48] Mowinckel, Sigmund, The Old Testament as Word of God, trans. Reidar B. Bjornard (New York, 1959), p. 40.

[49] Klausner, J., The Messianic Idea in Israel (New York, 1955), p. 520; Manson, William, Jesus the Messiah (London, 1945), p. 95.

[50] Article "Messiah", in Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971), Cols. 1407-10.

[51] Kalusner, op. cit., p. 8f.

[52] Scholem, Gershom, Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676 (Princeton, 1973), p. 95.

[53] Sweetman, J. W., Islam and Christian Theology, Vol. II, Pt. II (London, 1947), p. 127.

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[54]Article "Messiah," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. Hastings, Vol. VIII, p. 580.

[55]Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Chap. 49, as quoted by Klausner, op. cit., p. 520.

[56]Article "Messiah," Encyclopaedia Judaica, col. 1410.

[57]Schoeps, Hans Joachim, The Jewish-Christian Argument: A history of theologies in conflict, trans. David E. Green (New York, 1963), p. 23.

[58]Ibid., p. 25 and 57.

[59]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 25.

[60]Article "Messiah," in The Jewish Encyclopaedia (New York, 1904), p. 511.

[61]Zaehner, R. C., The Teachings of the Magi: A compendium of Zoroastrian Beliefs (London, 1956), p. 142.

[62]Pavry, J. D. C., The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a future life: from death to the individual judgement (2nd Edition; New York, 1965), p. 1.

[63]Zaehner, op. cit., p. 142.

[64]Pavry, op. cit., p. 2; see also the Persian translation of Zand, Vahuman Yasn, trans. Ṣādiq Hidāyat (Tehrān, 1342 Sh.), for detailed information on the millennia.

[65]Pavry, op. cit., p. 2.

[66]Moulton, J. H., Early Zoroastrianism (London, 1913), p. 81f; Hidāyat, Ṣādiq, op. cit., p. 56-57.

[67]Klausner, op. cit., p. 529.

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[68] Ibid., p. 529.

[69] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niᶜmah, Vol. II (Tehrān, 1379 A.H.), p. 390 (hereafter referred as Kamāl al-Dīn); al-Majlisī, Mahdi-yi Mawᶜūd, trans. ᶜAlī Dawānī (Qumm, 1344 A.H.), p. 934f.

[70] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 59.

[71] Ibn Babuyah, The Shīᶜite Creed, trans. A. A. A. Fyzee (London, 1942), p. 70; al-Ḥillī, al-Bāb Ḥādi ᶜAshar, trans. W. McE. Miller (London, 1928), p. 40f.

[72] Ibid., p. 70.

[73] al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, with commentaries by al-Jurjānī and others (Bulaq Ed., /Cairo/, 1325), III/261f.

[74] al-Kulaynī, op. cit., II/54, Ḥadīth 1.

[75] Ibid., p. 57, Ḥadīth 1. The waṣiyyah referred to in this tradition was revealed in written form, sealed and brought by Gabriel. It was only this waṣiyyah, concerning the Imāmate, which was sealed. The other tradition in the same section asserts that the waṣiyyah, when brought down by Gabriel, was dictated by the Prophet to ᶜAlī and was witnessed by Gabriel and other angels of the first rank who had accompanied him on this occasion. See Ḥadīth on p. 60. The other feature of this waṣiyyah was that it had several golden seals on it, which were opened by each Imām beginning from ᶜAlī to the last Imām al-Mahdī. Each Imām after breaking the seal was required to follow the instructions therein. Thus the first three Imāms, ᶜAlī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, chose to resist the Umayyad rule; while the other Imāms chose political quietism until the rising of al-Mahdī, in compliance with the instructions in the waṣiyyah. See Ḥadīth on p. 57f.

[76] Ibid., p. 54, Ḥadīth 3.

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[77] Ibid., p. 54.

[78] Ibid., p. 57, H. 1.

[79] op. cit., Vol. I/384f. H. 1.

[80] Ibid., 479f. H. 6.

[81] op. cit., Vol. II, p. 50, H. 3.

[82] op. cit., Vol. I, p. 431, H. 1.

[83] op. cit., Vol. I, p. 381, H. 3.

[84] Shahīd: The Imām is shahīd (witness) in the sense that he is the one who shall be called upon to bear witness on the day of Judgement to what was revealed to the Prophet and those who acknowledged him and those who charged him with falsehood (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. I/360, H. 2). ʿAlī is shahīd in the sense that he acknowledged the prophethood of Muhammad (ibid., p. 360, H. 3). There is one shahīd in every century from among the Imāms who are witnesses for the people and the Prophet is the witness for the Imāms (ibid., p. 359, H. 1). See also E. W. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon, Book I, part iv, p. 1610.

[85] Hujjah: In this context it means the Imām as the Hujjah is the receiver of the special qualities which entitles him to bear witness against those who refuse to accept the authority of God, and follow His injunctions. He is the only person who stands as a proof of His existence and the existence of His revelation on earth (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. I/361, H. 4 and 5). Dozy's explanation of the term is very close to the context here: "The pious are named in this manner, because God will present them on the day of last judgement, in order to refute the sinners who would claim that they did not know a person who gave them the example of saintliness." (Dozy, R., Supplément aux Dictionnaires Arabes /Beirut, 1968/, p. 249).

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[86]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 361, Ḥ. 5.

[87]Ibid., p. 346, Ḥ. 13.

[88]Ibid., p. 387, Ḥ. 1.

[89]al-Silāḥ: The Prophet, according to the Imāmites, left his sword, coat of mail and a short spear (ᶜanazah) to ᶜAlī b. Abū Ṭālib. The possession of the Prophet's sword was considered to be the most crucial factor in deciding the Imāmate and the obedience to the Imām. This sword was named Dhū al-Fiqār and was believed to have been brought by Gabriel from the heavens (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/451, Ḥ. 5). At one time two persons from the Zaydiyyah visited the sixth Imām and claimed that the sword of the Prophet was with ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, the grandson of al-Ḥasan. But the Imām refuted their claim by saying that all the weapons of the Prophet were in his own possession (ibid., I/449, Ḥ. 1). The coat of mail of the Prophet was known as Dhāt al-Fudūl. This will be worn by al-Qā'im when he rises and it will fit him only (ibid., I/449, Ḥ. 1). The silāḥ and ᶜilm (see note 93 for details of what comprised ᶜilm) of the Prophet remain in the same house. Since the Imāms inherited his ᶜilm the silāḥ had to be with them too (ibid., I/455, H. 3). Al-Jafr al-aḥmar contains these prophetic weapons which will be opened by Ṣāḥib al-Sayf (al-Qā'im) in his rising (ibid., I/459, Ḥ. 3).

[90]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/448, Ḥ. 1.

[91]op. cit., II/51, Ḥ. 1.

[92]op. cit., II/53, Ḥ. 5.

[93]Ibid., Ḥ. 1.

Al-Kutub: The Books include (i) al-Jāmiᶜah, (ii) Muṣḥaf Fāṭimah, and (iii) al-Jafr.

(i) al-Jāmiᶜah: This is described as a scroll, seventy cubits long, one cubit as long as the Prophet's forearm. It was written down by ᶜAlī under the dictation of the Prophet. It contains instructions about the ḥalāl and

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ḥarām and all the judgements that people need to know down to the smallest detail.

(ii) Muṣḥaf Fāṭimah: This is described as a book three times the size of the Qur'ān. The circumstances of its compilation is recounted by al-Ṣādiq. He relates that when Fāṭimah was in great sorrow after the death of her father, the Prophet, God sent an angel to console her. She heard the angel's voice speaking to her. She once complained to ᶜAlī about this strange event, and he asked her to inform him whenever she heard the voice. She did so and he wrote down everything the angel told her. The Muṣḥaf does not say anything about what is lawful and what is unlawful but relates future events. Comparing it to the Qur'ān, says the Imām, it contains nothing which was in the Qur'ān. It also contains the last will of Fāṭimah and the weapons of the Prophet accompanying it. Another feature of this book is that it contains the names of all those who would rule the world, together with their fathers' names (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/456f.).

(iii) al-Jafr: This is described as a pot made of cow-hide, in which was inscribed the knowledge of the prophets and of their legatees and the knowledge of the learned persons among the Israelites. There were two kinds of Jafr: al-Jafr al-Abyaḍ (the white) which contained the Psalms (al-Zabūr) of David, the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, the scrolls (ṣuḥuf) of Abraham, all the knowledge of ḥalāl and ḥarām and Muṣḥaf Fāṭimah; and al-Jafr al-Aḥmar (the red) which seems to have been a leather bag which contained the weapons which will be opened (yaftaḥ) by the Master of the Sword (Ṣāḥib al-Sayf) in order to take revenge (al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/456f.).

[94] al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/343, H. 8.

[95] Ibid., p. 337, H. 3.

[96] Taklīf: is the will (irādah) of somebody to whom obedience is incumbent, that is the will of God. But the condition attached to the imposition of such will is that it should not have been preceded by any other will, and that this will should have been announced (iᶜlām). This will of God, referred to here, is His revelation which He has sent down on His Prophet for the guidance of mankind (al-Ḥillī,

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Ibn al-Mutahhar, Kashf al-Murād fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-Iᶜtiqādāt /Mashhad, n.d./, p. 197 /Cited hereafter as Kashf al-Murād/). As a theological term taklīf means the necessity which is incumbent on the creatures of God to believe and act as He has revealed to them, through His Ḥujjah.

[97] al-Nuᶜmānī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah (Tabrīz, 1317), p. 67.

[98] al-Kulaynī, op. cit., I/333, H. 3.

[99] Ibid., p. 334, H. 11 and 13.

[100] al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 70.

[101] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 26.

[102] See Appendix I on Books on Ghaybah

[103] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 90f.

[104] Article "Mahdī", in the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden, 1953), p. 311.

[105] Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, trans. Franz Rosenthal (2nd Ed.; Princeton, 1967), II/156.

[106] Ibid., p. 158.

[107] Aḥmad Amīn, Ḍuḥa al-Islām (Cairo, 1962), III/238. He also wrote a tract entitled al-Mahdī wa al-Mahdawiyyah (Cairo, 1951), which was refuted by the Imāmite writer Muḥammad Jawād Maghniyyah, in his al-Mahdī al-Muntaẓar wa al-ᶜAql (Beirut, n.d.), p. 57-65.

[108] Shaban, M. A., Islamic History (Cambridge, 1971), p. 95 does not believe thal al-Mukhtār made a great appeal for the support of the non-Arab converts, the mawālī.

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[109]Snouck, Hurgronje, Der Mahdi in Verspreide Geschriften, Vol. I (Bonn, 1923), p. 152.

[110]I have used the French and Arabic translations of this work under the titles of Le Dogme et la Loi de l'Islam, trans. Félix Avin (Paris, 1920); al-ʿAqidah wa al-Sharīʿah fī al-Islām (Cairo, 1964).

[111]Goldziher, Le Dogme, p. 182 and 185.

[112]His article "Mahdi", in the E.R.E., ed. J. Hastings, Vol. VIII, p. 337.

[113]al-Shaybī, Kāmil Muṣṭafā, al-Ṣilah bayna al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyuʿ (Cairo, 1969), p. 106f. quotes al-Wardī's opinion from the latter's book entitled Sulṭān al-Wāʿizīn.

[114]Tahdhīb sīrat Ibn Hishām, Vol. II (Cairo, 1960), p. 155; Ibn Saʿd, Ṭabaqat, Vol. II/53-57; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fī al-Taʾrīkh (Beirut, 1965), II/323 (Cited hereafter as al-Kāmil).

[115]al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal (Tehran, 1335), p. 12.

[116]Ibn Bābūyah, A Shīʿite Creed, p. 64.

[117]Ibid., p. 64.

[118]al-Qur'ān: verses concerning Jesus' ascension IV:157 f.; concerning Moses' return VII:142.

[119]Goldziher, Le Dogme, p. 185.

[120]Darmesteter, J., Le Mahdi depuis des origines de l'Islām jusqu'à nos jours. I had access to the Persian translation of this work by Muḥsin-i Jahānsūz (Tehran, 1318).

[121]Blochet, Edgar, Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Mususlmane (Paris, 1903).

[122]Darmesteter, op. cit., p. 11.

[123]Ibid., p. 18. The ḥadīth is quoted from the Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldūn.

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[124]Minorsky, V., "Iran: Opposition, Martyrdom, and Revolt," in Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization, ed. by Von Grunebaum, p. 201.

[125]Blochet, op. cit., p. vii.

[126]Ibid., p. 128.

[127]Ibid., p. 130. Many scholars assert that Judaism simply borrowed the idea of Saved Saviour from Iran, and point out the important contacts between Judaism and Iran from the time of Cyrus right up into the third century A.D. See for example, Frederick Houk Borsch, The Son of Man in Myth and History (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 84f.; S. Mowinckel, He that Cometh, trans. G. W. Anderson (Oxford, 1959), 431f.

[128]Ibid., p. 132.

[129]Snouck, op. cit., p. 150.

[130]Tabarī, Ta'rīkh, Vol. VII/546. Sulaymān b. Surad had gathered the Penitents (al-Tawwābīn) around him to march against the Umayyads. Before doing so he went to offer his homage on the grave of al-Husayn in Karbalā'.

[131]Tūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 106; al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 85.

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CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

[1]The date is recorded in Mas^{c}ūdī, Murūj, Vol. VIII, p. 40. al-Mufīd, al-Irshād, p. 670. Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, Vol. VII, p. 126.

[2]In this thesis the term 'Imāmite' is used to designate the Ithnā ^{c}Asharites (the Twelvers) and not as used in the Books on Sects (milal) to indicate all those who believed in the nass (designation) of ^{c}Alī by the Prophet.

[3]al-Mufīd, loc. cit.

[4]In describing various descendants of Abū Tālib who were killed during the ^{c}Abbāsid period, al-Isfahānī, makes a point to draw his readers' attention to the fact that the person killed was proclaimed as al-Mahdī, and that his followers expected him to rise against the ruling power. He reports about Muḥammad b. ^{c}Abd Allāh (killed during al-Manṣūr's caliphate): "People believed that Muḥammad b. ^{c}Abd Allāh was the promised Mahdī, so much so that they used to call him Muḥammad b. ^{c}Abd Allāh al-Mahdī. ....and that they wished that this Mahdī would revolt." See Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, p. 196. See also the account of Muḥammad b. ^{c}Abd Allāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah who was believed to be al-Mahdī too, p. 222. Here the author of Maqātil clearly mentions that after al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah had been recognized as the mahdī who would establish the ^{c}Alīd rule by the majority of the Shī^{c}ites, with the exception of Ja^{c}far al-Ṣādiq who had predicted the victory of the ^{c}Abbāsids in this venture, al-Saffah and following him al-Manṣūr persisted in their aim of getting their hands on him and his brother Ibrāhīm. This they did because they both had paid allegiance to him in the beginning and were now afraid of his rivalry in the matter of caliphate. It must be noted here that the title Mahdī may have been used here in a purely honorific and political sense, as it had been used to describe ^{c}Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. See Snouck Hurgronje, Der Mahdi in Verspreide Geschiften, Vol. I, p. 150, for his view with reference to the use of this word for ^{c}Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

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[5]al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. II, p. 154. Tūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah (Najaf, 1385 A.H.) p. 134. Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I, p. 339. al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal, Vol. I, p. 170.

[6]al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 79.

[7]al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal, 1/1170.

[8]Mas^{c}ūdī, op. cit., p. 40.

[9]al-Nawbakhtī, Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. Mūsā was one of the leading Imāmite theologians in the first half of the tenth century. The period coincides with the Short Occultation (al-Ghaybat al-Qasīrah) of the twelfth Imāmite Imām, which lasted up to the year 329/940-1. For the detailed account of his life and works see: Iqbāl, ^{c}Abbās, Khwāndān-i Nawbakhtī (2nd ed.; Tehrān, 1960) p. 125f. See also the introduction to Firaq al-Shī^{c}ah by Helmut Ritter and his sources on the life of al-Nawbakhtī.

[10]See the sources mentioned in fn. 4 above.

[11]The usual translation for this word is 'the Proof'. We do not know who coined this translation for the first time in European languages. In the Shī^{c}ī terminology the Imām is the Ḥujjah, i.e. the Proof of God on earth. But I have suggested below that it is more comprehensible if translated as 'the Competent Authority' representing God on earth. See below p. 77f. See also fn. 85 in Chap. I.

[12]This title is difficult to render in English. Fyzee in his translation of Ibn Bābūyah's I^{c}tiqādāt, translates it as the one "who upholds" and as full title goes -- al-Qā'im bi amrillāh -- "who upholds the command of God". But as discussed below I would be inclined to agree with Majlisī's explanation of this title as it appears in one of the traditions of al-Kāfī. The tradition is reported on the authority of the fifth Imām who was asked about al-Qā'im. So he struck the sixth Imām with his hand and said, "This is, by God, al-Qā'im." The reporter adds that when the fifth Imām died he told the tradition to the sixth Imām who said, "This is true. Perhaps you do not believe that every Imām is Qā'im following the preceding Imām." al-Kāfī, 2/114. Majlisī explains that Qā'im as used in such reports means al-Qā'im bi'l-jihad, the one who will arise with sword, and this applies to all the Imāms. Majlisī adds that this was the way Imams had chosen not to disappoint those Shī^{c}ites who were expecting their Imāms to arise against the tyrannical caliphate. See additional comments on the same page of al-Kāfī.

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[13]al-Nawbakhtī, al-Firaq, p. 79-80. See also al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., 1/170; Tūsī, op. cit., p. 141; Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., p. 24.

[14]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 80-81; al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 170; Tusi, op. cit., p. 62, 142; al-Mufīd, al-Fusūl al-Mukhtārah min al-ᶜUyūn wa al-Mahāsin (Najaf, 1962) Sect number three, p. 262 (Hereafter referred as al-Fusūl al-Mukhtārah).

[15]al-Shahrastānī actually uses the term rajᶜah op. cit., p. 171.

[16]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 82; al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 171; Tūsī, op. cit. 143, al-Mufīd, op. cit., sect number four, p. 263.

[17]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 82-83; al-Shahrastānī, loc. cit.; al-Mufīd, op. cit., sect number five. See also some relevant traditions on this subject in al-Kulaynī's al-Kāfī: Kitāb al-Hujjah (Tehran, 1392) II/68.

[18]See the above reference to al-Kāfī.

[19]al-Shahrastānī says that people believed that even al-ᶜAskarī was of wicked character but in secret, while Jaᶜfar was openly known as unrighteous. op. cit., 171.

[20]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 83-84; al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 171.

[21]al-Mufīd calls him ᶜAlī, op. cit., sect number five, p. 263.

[22]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 84-85, al-Shahrastānī, loc. cit.

[23]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 85; al-Shahrastānī, loc. cit.; al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 263.

[24]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 87; al-Shahrastānī does not mention this fraction separately but includes it in the eighth sect. See loc. cit.

[25]al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 87; al-Shahrastānī, loc. cit.; Tūsī, op. cit., p. 51, 63, 145; al-Mufīd, op. cit. p. 264.

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[26] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 88-89; al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 264; al-Shahrastanī and Ṭusī do not mention this fraction.

[27] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 90; al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 172; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 163; al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 265.

[28] By this, the claim to the Imāmate of Jaᶜfar, al-ᶜAskarī's brother is nullified.

[29] By this, the claim set forward by the followers of Muhammad b. ᶜAlī, or before him by those who upheld the Imāmate of Ismāᶜīl b. Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq and his descendants, is nullified.

[30] See the tradition regarding this prohibition in al-Kulaynī's al-Kafī, Vol. II, p. 157 and 161 and below for discussion relating to this subject.

[31] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 91-93; al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 261; Ibn Ḥazm mentions this sect as the Qiṭṭīᶜiyyah, who according to him, belong to the Imāmiyya Rawāfid, see Ibn Ḥazm, Heterodoxies, p. 47.

[32] The Faṭḥiyyah believed in the Imāmate of ᶜAbd Allāh b. Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq, by the surname of afṭaḥ al-ra's (broad-headed) or afṭaḥ al-rijlayn (broad-footed). Al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 65; and al-Kashshī, Ikhtiyār, p. 253. But this fraction (13) believed that the Imāmate of two brothers is lawful if the elder brother has no son, and al-Nawbakhtī names them al-Faṭḥiyyah al-Khāliṣ, the pure Faṭḥites, p. 94; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 62, 145. For the Imāmate of the eldest son see the tradition mentioned by al-Kashshī, op. cit., p. 282.

[33] Compare the Ismāᶜīlī doctrine of the Imāmate of two brothers and their interpretation of this. According to them al-Ḥasan was Imām-i mustawdaᶜ i.e. temporarily entrusted with Imāmate, and al-Husayn was Imām-i Mustaqarr or "regular Imām" which means that Imamate was permanently with him. For this reason Imāmate was inherited by his descendants. The same is the case with this group with different interpretation. See: Haft Bāb-i Bū Isḥāq, ed. and trans. W. Ivanow (Bombay, 1959), p. 22.

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[34] al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., p. 93-94, al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 262; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 62, 145.

[35] This phrase, as the history of sectarian development in Islam shows, was used by the ᶜAlīds if the person for whom the allegiance was being sought was not known. Thus it happened that al-Ḥallāj initially invited people on behalf of somebody from āl Muḥammad without naming the person. (Louis Massignon, La passion d'al Halladj, martyr mystique de l'Islam (Paris, 1922) p. 75. Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, p. 71) See also the use of this phrase by Abū Muslim, the Commander of Khurāsān, in Abū Muslim, sardār-i Khurāsān by Yūsufī, Ghulām Husayn, (Mashad, 1344) p. 50. See also Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit. Vol. VII, p. 126.

[36] al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 172.

[37] Ibn Ḥazm, Kitāb al-Fiṣal (Cairo, 1317-1321), p. 181.

[38] al-Ashᶜarī, Maqālāt, Vol. I p. 100; Ṭūsī, op. cit., 99, 142.

[39] Masᶜūdī, op. cit., Vol. VIII/40; al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf (Beirut, 1968), p. 199; al-Baghdādī, al-Farq p. 23; al-Isfarāyinī, Abū al-Muẓaffar (d. 471/1078-79), al-Tabṣīr fī al-Dīn wa tamyīz al-firqat al-nājiyah ᶜan firaq al-hālikīn (Cairo, 1955) p. 42. This last author calls the Qiṭᶜiyyah, Ithna ᶜAshariyyah.

[40] al-Shahrastānī, op. cit., p. 127.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibn Ḥazm does not use this term to designate the Qiṭᶜiyyah but Masᶜūdī in Muruj, Vol. Viii, p. 40, al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 63 and al-Isfarāyinī, op. cit., p. 23 use this word. Strange enough, and proving the origin of this word as later, even al-Nawbakhtī does not use this word for the Imāmites.

[43] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 18.

[44] Ibn al-Nadīm, The Fihirist of al-Nadīm, trans. and ed. Bayard Dodge (New York, 1970) Vol.I p. 439-40. See also

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Iqbāl, ᶜAbbās, Khwāndān-i Nawbakhtī, p. 111 where he thinks that in all probability this must have been his early view which he must have modified later on. See his sources in support of his contention.

[45] p. 78-79.

[46] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 60, al-Mufīd, op. cit., sect number thirteen, p. 265.

[47] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 147.

[48] Massignon, La Passion, p. 151.

[49] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 282.

[50] Ibid., p. 132.

[51] Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. XIII, trans. Dawānī, ᶜAlī into Persian under the title of Mahdī-yi Mawᶜūd (Tehrān, n.d.) p. 310f.

[52] His full name was Yaḥyā b. al-Qāsim. He was the companion of the sixth and seventh Imāms (al-Najāshi, Aḥmad b. ᶜAlī, Kitāb al-Rijāl /Tehrān, n.d./ p. 344). According to Ṭūsī, he was the companion of the sixth Imām only. (Ṭūsī, Fihrist /Najaf, 1960/, p. 207-208). This seems to be more accurate because Abū Baṣīr died in the year 150/767 two years after the sixth Imām had died and could hardly have had the chance to be the associate of the seventh Imām whose Imāmate was in dispute for some time. There is a lot of difference of opinion about his reliability in the Imāmite sources. Al-Kashshī reports that he was highly respected by the Imām who is reported to have said that Abū Baṣīr and Zurārah, another associate of the Imām, were the trustees of God having the knowledge of His injunctions. "Had it not been for them the traditions of the Prophet would have disappeared." (al-Kashshī, op. cit., p. 170). The Imām used to recommend people who could not come to him to ask their religious difficulties to ask Abū Baṣīr about those things (op. cit., p. 171). It is reported that he was blind and his blindness was cured by a miracle performed by the fifth Imām. (op. cit., p. 174).

[53] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 282.

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[54]This relationship is emphasized in many places mainly because, I think, the Qā'im has to be a direct descendant of the Prophet.

[55]al-Nu^{c}mānī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 124. See also Majlisī, op. cit., p. 229 where he discusses the significance of various titles used for the twelfth Imām.

[56]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 114.

[57]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 27.

[58]al-Nu^{c}mānī, op. cit., p. 164. The Battle of Camel (35 A.H.) is a symbol of ^{c}Alīd political victory.

[59]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., p. 114 footnote under hadīth no. 7.

[60]Ṭūsī, Amālī (Baghdād, 1963), Vol. II, p. 33. The tradition reported here is on the authority of the sixth Imām who said, "When al-Ḥusayn b. ^{c}Alī was killed angels raised a hue and cry to God the Exalted and said, 'O our Lord, did they treat al-Ḥusayn, Your best friend (ṣafīy) in this manner?' He said, "God will raise for them the cry of al-Qā'im," and added, "by this he will take vengeance against those who wronged him."

[61]Ibn Bābūyah, ^{c}Ilal al-Sharāyi^{c} (Qumm, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 218-19.

[62]al-Nu^{c}mānī, op. cit., p. 174.

[63]Ibid., p. 106.

[64]Sayyid Mīr Lawhī, Kifāyat al-Muhtadī fī ma^{c}rifat al-Mahdī (MS in Tehrān Univ. Library, Mishkāt Collection), fl. 26-27-28. See also Appendix I.

[65]al-Nu^{c}mānī, op. cit., p. 98.

[66]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., p. 180; Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II, p. 48.

[67]Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 128.

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[68]Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 268; al-Mufīd, al-Irshād, p. 700. I had an opportunity to examine a microfilm copy of a manuscript from Makkah Library of the Ḥaram (Number 34) at Amīr al-Mu'minīn Library in Najaf, which mentions even the time of appearance of al-Qā'im on the day of ᶜAshūrā. The tradition runs: "He will come out from Makkah in the month of Muḥarram, on the day of ᶜAshūrā, after evening prayers in the year two hundred after one thousand." (al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, Talkhīs al-Bayān fī ᶜalāmāt Mahdī ākhir al-Zamān), fl. 4). In his thesis on "The Ashura ceremonies in Lebanon" submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1963, G.S. Godeon quotes the famous Ghadīriyya epic in which the twelfth Imām is called upon to bring an end to the mourning of al-Ḥusayn:

> Hasten up, hasten up O son of the Virgin (i.e. the Mahdī)
> Thy Shia are ever in mourning garb,
> at lateness of the coming of thy rule."
> (Vol. I, p. 4)

[69]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., 180.

[70]See above p.

[71]Zumurrudiyān, Aḥmad, Bayān-i Haqīqat (Shiraz, 1350 Shamsī), p. 22.

[72]See article Ḥudjdja in E.I. (2nd edition); see also Fyzee's translation of Ibn Bābūyah's I'tiqadat -- A Shiᶜite Creed p. 72, fn. 1; Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, ed. J. Milton Cowan (3rd Ed. 1971) p. 156.

[73]In Majma' al-Baḥrayn wa matlaᶜ al-nayyarayn by al-Turayhī, Fakhr al-Dīn b. Muḥammad, in giving the lexical explanation of the word Ḥujjah and al-Ḥujjah al-Bālighah, the author says this is elucidated in the Tafsīr as an explanation of ḥarām and ḥalāl (i.e. the Sharīᶜah) by God (through His Ḥujjah). Indeed God will ask people on the day of Judgement, "O my slaves, do you have the knowledge (of everything I want you to know)?". If they say, "Yes" God will say to them, "Did I not teach you (through my Ḥujjah)?" If they say, "No" He will say, "Did you not learn until you began to practise?" This is the Ḥujjah which has reached you (bāligha)." (Lith. Tehrān, 1309 A.H.).

In Tāj al-ᶜArūs, Vol. V, p. 464 and Lisān al-ᶜArab

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(Beirut, 1955), V ol. II, p. 228, the meaning of the term al-Ḥujja is explained as the Wajh (i.e. either a prominent personality or manner or method) through which victory can be attained in the matter of dispute or controversy.

[74]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., 176; see also al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 7 where ᶜAlī is reported to have told one of his most renowned associates, Kumayl b. Ziyād, about the necessity of the presence of the Ḥujjah of God on earth whether Ẓāhir Maᶜlūm (manifest, recognized) or Khā'if Maghmūr (hidden, unknown). See for the rhetoric and lexical explanation of the khuṭba, Majlisī, op. cit.

[75]al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 68.

[76]In most early Imāmite sources the prohibition to call the twelfth Imām by his name appear. See al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 7; Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, p. 2/361-62; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 122. On the other hand, some of the Imāmite writers in the Ṣafavid period have interpreted this prohibition enforced during the Short Occultation only -- thus a temporary one. Aghā Buzurg in his al-Dharīᶜah, Vol. XVI mentions several treatises composed on this theme -- one of them by Mīr Dāmād. Majlisī is opposed to this interpretation, namely, that the said prohibition was confined to the Short Occultation only. He contends that since the Imām is still in danger of being exposed to his enemies the prohibition continues even to-day. (Majlisī, op. cit., p. 55) But ᶜAlī Dawānī, who translated this volume of Biḥār into Persian, disagrees with Majlisī, and in the footnote he says that the prohibition was meant only during the Short Occultation because the ᶜAbbāsid Caliph at that time was after the Imām to get his hands on him and kill him. (Ibid., p. 56.)

[77]Very little is known about this companion of the sixth Imam. He is not even known by any other name besides Khaythamah. Al-Najāshī says that he was reported to have composed a book. (al-Najāshī, op. cit., p. 118)

[78]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., [illegible]320.

[79]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., p. 213. The same tradition appears in the earlier source al-Kashshī, op. cit., p. 320-21.

[80]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I/217-8.

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[81] Ibid., p. 317.

[82] Ziyārāt, plural of ziyārah, are the greetings reported on the authority of the Shīᶜī Imāms to be read on the occasion of pilgrimage to the tombs of the Imāms.

[83] Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, Vol. VII, p. 546.

[84] Ṭabarī, op. cit., Vol. VIII, p.

[85] Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist (Najaf, 1960), p. 67; al-Najāshī, op. cit., p. 96 mentions the work as Kitāb al-Ziyārāt.

[86] See the introduction to Kāmil al-Ziyārāt by Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Gharawī al-Urdūbādī, p. z; Ṭūsī in his Rijāl, p. 458 mentions the same date.

[87] Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār: Kitāb al-Mazār (Tehrān, 1389) Vol. 102.

[88] Majlisī, op. cit., p. 81. Yāsin is one of the titles of the Prophet and one of the Sūrahs of the Qurᶜān also begins with these two letters: Yā Sīn.

[89] This is an established practice even to-day. See for example, the arrangement of the Ziyārāt in Shaykh ᶜAbbās al-Qummi's Mafātīḥ al-Jinan. In ḥadīth compilation too, this practice is followed.

[90] Majlisī, op. cit., p. 116.

[91] The best example of this objective approach is his Tashīh al-I'tiqādāt of Ibn Bābūyah's Creed, especially worthy of mention is his refutation of Ibn Bābūyah's view that the Prophet and the Imāms were all murdered. Al-Mufīd replied that historical facts did not comply with this belief which was based on a weak tradition. The footnote in the Persian translation of Creed quotes al-Mufīd's refutation in full. (4th ed. Tehrān, 1380, p. 120, fn. 3).

[92] Majlisī, op. cit., p. 97.

[93] Ibn Qawlawayh, Kāmil, p. 177. Shaykh ᶜAbbās al-Qummī, who must have used a different manuscript has the word manṣūr (victorious) instead of mahdī, i.e. a victorious Imām. See Mafātīḥ, p. 921.

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[94]Compare the two sentences in the famous ziyārat al-wārith, as reported by Ibn Qawlawayh and later on by al-Qummī:

Assalāmu ᶜalayka ayyuha'l-waṣiyyu'l-raḍiyyu'l barru'l-taqiyyu. (Kāmil, p. 229)

Ashhadu annaka'l-Imāmu'l-barru'l-taqiyyu'l-raḍiyyu'l-zakiyyu'l-hādiyu'l-mahdiyyu. (Mafātīḥ, p. 868)

[95]Ibn Qawlawayh, op. cit., p. 27f.

[96]al-Mufīd, al-Irshad, p. 702.

[97]Ibn Qawlawayh, op. cit., p. 30.

[98]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, p. I/73.

[99]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 199-200.

[100]al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 179.

[101]Masᶜūdī, Murūj, p. V/179-181; Ṭabarī, op. cit., Vol. IV/434 (Cairo ed. 1939); Ibn Saᶜd, Ṭabaqāt, V/77; al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, p. 39; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 15; al-Ashᶜarī in his Maqālāt (Vol. I/195) does not mention the belief in the Mahdiism of Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah as one of the tenets of the Kaysānites. Rather, he says, one of the sub-sects of the Kaysānites upheld ᶜAbd Allāh b. Muᶜāwiya, great grandson of Jaᶜfar b. Abū Ṭālib as the Mahdī.

[102]al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 60.

[103]al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 61; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 18.

[104]al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 63; al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., p. I/97. It is relevant to note that, like other Shīᶜite sects the Baṭinids among the Ismāᶜīlites maintained the belief in the Mahdī and considered him to be one of the descendants of the Prophet and ᶜAlī. But they do not accept his ghaybah, since, according to them, long life is impossible, and that to set a time for reappearance (ẓuhūr) is out of the question. According to them, one of the descendants of Ismāᶜīl b. Jaᶜfar al-Ṣādiq is always, whether concealed or manifest, present as Imām:

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dar zamānī kih yakī az dhuriyyat ū (Ismāᶜīl) Qā'im ast va har kih bi-jidd ṭalab kunad ū-rā bi-yābad va Qā'im al-Qiyāmah hamishah hast va būd va khwāhad būd; gāhī bi-ḥālat-i kashf va gāh bah ṣūrat-i sitr, gāh bi-ṣūrat-i farzand va gāh pidar.

Haft bāb-i Bū Isḥāq, ed. and trans. W. Ivanow (1959) p. 22-23. See also Kitāb Bayān al-Adyān by Abū al-Maᶜālī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-ᶜAlavī (d. 485/1092-3) (Tehrān, 1342/1964 Sh), p. 39.

[105]Ibn al-Nadīm, op. cit., p. I/535.

[106]al-Qummī, Shaykh ᶜAbbās, al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb (Najaf, 1969) Vol. III, p. 293. Ṭūsī does not mention this in his al-Fihrist, p. 107.

[107]Ibn al-Nadīm, op. cit., I/535.

[108]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 118.

[109]Masᶜūdī, al-Tanbīh (Beirut, 1968), p. 198-9.

[110]Printed at Ḥaydariyyah Press, Najaf, Iraq.

[111]Kitāb Sulaym, p. 120.

[112]op. cit., p. 85, 125, 151, 207, ...

[113]al-Mufīd, al-Fusūl al-Mukhtārah; al-Ashᶜarī. Maqālāt, p. I/88 says that the Imāmites are those who maintain that there was a specific designation of ᶜAlī as an Imām. Lahījī in Gawhar-i Murād defines Imāmites as: "Every Shīᶜite sect which believes in the necessity of infallibility in the Imām and considers the existence of such an Imām indispensable in all ages is called Imāmiyyah. Thus Kaysāniyyah and Zaydiyyah are not Imāmites." (Litho, Tehrān, 10th Chapter, third section, third discourse.)

[114]al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 57-60.

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[115]al-Khwarizmī, al-Muwaffaq, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn (Najaf, 1367 A.H.), Vol. I, p. 67. Al-Khwarizmi was the chief disciple of the great commentator al-Zamakhsharī. More than any other Sunnite traditionists, al-Khwarizmī, accepts and cites many of the unusual Shī[c]ite traditions. He is often cited by later Imāmite scholars as one of their important authorities.

[116]Ṭūsī, Amālī, Vol. II/26, Fourth Part.

[117]al-Hillī, Ibn al-Muṭahhar, al-Nāfi' Yawm al-Hashr (Najaf edition), Chap. 211, p. 78.

[118]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, II/9.

[119]Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., II/96-98.

[120]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 124-128.

[121]Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., II/96.

[122]al-Mufīd, al-Irshād, p. 672.

[123]Shaykh Ḥusayn [c]Abd al-Wahhāb, [c]Uyūn al-Mu[c]jizāt (Najaf, 1950), p. 127. See the introduction to this edition by Muḥammad [c]Alī al-Awradābādī where he says that he was being consulted by the two Sharifs, al-Murtaḍā and al-Raḍī, both al-Mufīd's disciples.

[124]al-Qummī, Shaykh [c]Abbās, Anwār al-Bahiyyah (Mashad, n.d.), p. 302.

[125]For the traditions of this subject of the second coming of Jesus in Islamic eschatology see article [c]Isā in the E.I. 2nd ed. Vol. IV/84.

[126]See the sources referred to in fn. 119 and 120 on the marriage of Narjis with al-[c]Askarī. See for the translation of this account in English in Dwight Donaldson, The Shi[c]ite Religion (London, 1933), p. 219f.

[127]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/15. See also traditions on this subject in Wensinck's Handbook, under Mahdī.

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[128] Ḥakīmah, the daughter of the ninth Imām, Muḥammad al-Jawād (220/835-6) holds a very decisive place as the one who has reported on the birth of the twelfth Imām. The sources show that she was highly respected by the tenth and eleventh Imāms and was very often entrusted with esoteric knowledge. Majlisī describes her as "the one who possessed the secret knowledge of the Imāms and was among the sufarā' (agents) and abwāb -- the "gates" (the means by which one communicates with the Hidden Imām) of the twelfth Imām after the death of the eleventh Imām, al-ᶜAskarī. Majlisī, Biḥār, Vol. 102/79.

[129] For the importance of this night in the Imāmite devotions and the recommended prayers and fasting see al-Qummī's Mafātīḥ, p. 165f.

[130] al-Qur'ān, al-Sajdah is the Sūrah XXXII and Yāsin is XXXVI. Both these Sūrahs are recommended to be read at child birth.

[131] These are seven in the fiqh: the forehead, the palms of both hands, both knees and two toes.

[132] Here the expression means that he was already circumcised, and that the umbilical cord had been cut and his navel was clean.

[133] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/96-98.

[134] op. cit., II/56.

[135] Shaykh Husayn, ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, op. cit., p. 134.

[136] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/121; Majlisī. Mahdī-yi Mawᶜūd, p. 596.

[137] All the Imāms are referred as "Ibn Rasūl Allāh" in both the Shīᶜite and most Sunnite works.

[138] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 152.

[139] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I/317.

[140] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 115; al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 114 and other sources which treat the subject of the Mahdī.

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[141]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 115.

[142]The two spots in the sanctuary of the Kaᶜbah.

[143]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 183.

[144]This famous phrase, frequently quoted to show the function of the Mahdī, in early Imāmite history had, as we saw, solely a political emphasis; in the Ṣafavid period, it assumed a mainly Ṣūfī interpretation. The great Ṣafavid writer on this theme, Sayyid Haydar al-Āmulī, in explaining this tradition, which is quoted on the authority of the Prophet, says:

> By "filling the earth with justice" is meant that (al-Qā'im al-Muntaẓar) will fill the hearts with knowledge (and affirmation) of the Unity of God (tawḥīd), after they had been filled with polytheism and ignorance.

Al-Āmulī, Haydar ibn ᶜAlī, Jāmiᶜ al-Asrār wa Manbaᶜ al-anwār, ed. H. Corbin and Uthmān Ismāᶜīl Yahyā (Tehrān, 1969) p. 102. This interpretation clearly shows how the Shīᶜite hope of the establishment of the Imāmite political authority had been affected during the period between the Būyid experiment and the Ṣafavid establishment of the Shīᶜite power.

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CHAPTER III

Part I

FOOTNOTES

[1]al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. I, p. 315-318, where Hishām, in his youth, is reported to have had discussion on the necessity of the Imāmate with one of the earliest Muᶜtazilite, ᶜAmr b. ᶜUbayd (d. 145/762), in Basra.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I, p. 317.

[4]See the valuable introduction to Tūsī's al-Jumal wa al-ᶜUqūd by Waᶜiẓzadah al-Khurāsānī (Mashhad, 1968) 9f.

[5]Bahr al-ᶜUlūm, Muhammad al-Mahdī, Kitāb al-Rijāl al-Sayyid, known as al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah (3 Vols.; Najaf, 1965-67), III/316f.

[6]See Fyzee's article "The Creed of Ibn Bābawayhi" in the Journal of Bombay University, Vol. XII (1943), p. 70-86 which is a detailed examination of Ibn Bābūyah's creed, compared with the Taṣḥīḥ al-Iᶜtiqādat of al-Mufīd.

[7]Ibn al-Nadīm, op. cit., p. 491.

[8]al-Najāshī, Kitāb al-Rijāl (Tehrān, n.d.), p. 311-316 mentions titles such as:
al-Īḍāḥ fī al-Imāmah, al-radd ᶜalā al-Jāḥiz al-ᶜUthmāniyyah, Kitāb naqd faḍīlat al-Muᶜtaẓila, al-naqd ᶜalā ibn ᶜAbbād fī al-Imāmah and so on. See also Ṭūsī, al-Fihrist, p. 186f and and Ibn al-Nadīm, op. cit., p. 491.

[9]al-Asadābādī, Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-ᶜAdl, Vol. XX (Cairo, n.d.) Parts 1 and II. (Hereafter referred as al-Mughnī.)

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[10]Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, Vol. IX (Beirut, 1965), p. 336, 341, 392, 417 cites many occasions when even the Caliphs sought to please the powerful naqīb of the Ṭālibiyyīn, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā.

[11]Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/157.

[12]Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., Vol. VIII/339.

[13]Majlisī, Mahdī-yi Mawᶜūd, p. 475.

[14]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 1.

[15]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. II/179.

[16]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 142.

[17]al-Mufīd, al-Irshād, p. 673.

[18]al-Qur'ān, Sūrah VIII:42.

[19]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 142.

[20]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I/149. Majlisī in his commentary of al-Kāfī explains the meaning of the Imām al-Ẓāhir and Imām al-Maghmūr, quoting Shaykh al-Bahā'ī: "Imām al-Ẓāhir is like our master, Amīr al-Mu'minīn /ᶜAlī/ during his caliphate; and Imām al-Maghmūr is the one who does not call upon people to pay him allegiance except the special ones, just as Amīr al-Mu'minīn was during the caliphate of his predecessors, and the other Imāms during different epochs and the Master of the Age (Ṣāhib al-Zamān), our Master Mahdī in our times." al-Kāfī, Vol. II/167 fn.

[21]His full name is Zurārah b. Aᶜyan. He was one of the eminent disciples of the sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq and author of several important Shīᶜite works. See al-Najashī, Rijāl, p. 132-133; Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 100.

[22]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., Vol. II/170.

[23]op. cit., Vol. II/175.

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[24] op. cit., Vol. II/178; al-Nuᶜmānī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 89 adds at the end "only his special slaves (friends) in his religion."

[25] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. I/93.

[26] al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 692.

[27] Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī, Ṭabaqāt Aᶜlām al-Shīᶜah, Vol. I (Baghdad, 1971), p. mū.

[28] al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 91.

[29] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Rijāl (Najaf, 1961), p. 436.

[30] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/114.

[31] op. cit., Vol. II/151.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See Appendix IV on al-Khums.

[34] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/179.

[35] Ibid.

[36] al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 689-90.

[37] op. cit., p. 686.

[38] His full name in al-Najāshī's Rijāl is Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Junayd Abū ᶜAlī al-Kātib al-Iskāfī who "had goods belonging to the Ṣāhib /al-Zamān/.", p. 299.

[39] op. cit., p. 685.

[40] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Rijāl, p. 420 and 434.

[41] op. cit., p. 420.

[42] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 215.

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[43] op. cit., p. 214.

[44] op. cit., p. 216.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid. See also Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/151. The modern interpretation of this practice of washing the dead body of the Imam and the performance of other funeral rites, which, according to the Imāmites, must be carried out by the succeeding Imām, is that the twelfth Imām himself must have done everything from behind /the scenes/; it was only to show the people that Abū ʿAmr performed the rites. See: al-Ṣadr, Muḥammad, Ta'rīkh al-Ghaybat al-Ṣughrā (Beirut, 1972), p. 399f. In all probability, this is the reason why Majlisī, who quotes Ṭūsī in details, does not include this part in his account of the First Agent. See Majlisī, op. cit., p. 665-666.

[47] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 216.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 218.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 222; Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/114.

[53] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. II/114.

[54] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 221.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] op. cit., p. 222.

[58] Ibid.

[59] op. cit., p. 223.

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[60] Ibid.

[61] op. cit., p. 227..

[62] op. cit., p. 224.

[63] op. cit., p. 240.

[64] op. cit., p. 228.

[65] op. cit., p. 228-229.

[66] op. cit., p. 236.

[67] Ibn Bābūyah, The Shi^cite Creed, p. 110.

[68] Tūsī, op. cit., p. 236.

[69] Ibid.

[70] op. cit., p. 237.

[71] op. cit., p. 186.

[72] op. cit., p. 183.

[73] Najāshī, Rijāl, p. 293.

[74] Tūsī, op. cit., p. 186f.

[75] Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil, Vol. VIII/290.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Yāqūt b. ^cAbd Allāh al-Hamawī, Irshād al-Arīb ilā ma^crifat al-adīb, known as Mu^cjam al-Udabā', ed. D. S. Margoliouth, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1923), Vol. I/296.

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Ibn Miskawayh, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, Tajārib al-Umam (Cairo, 1914) Vol. V/123, tells us about the good relationship between the son of the vizier ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Furāt who followed the deposed Ḥamīd b. ᶜAbbās, and al-Shalmaghānī. Unfortunately for al-Shalmaghānī, and the vizier, the Qarmatians had during this period plundered the caravan of the pilgrims and al-Furāt and his son were suspected of being behind this because of their Shīᶜism. See also Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., Vol. VIII/292-94.

[79] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 187.

[80] op. cit., p. 252.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., Vol. VIII/291.

[83] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 241.

[84] op. cit., p. 242.

[85] Ibid.

[86] op. cit., p. 242f. Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/193. For al-Sufyānī see E.I. 1st ed., article al-Mahdī.

[87] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 256f.

[88] See a graphic introduction to Ṭūsī's al-Jumal wa al-ᶜUqūd by Waᶜizzadah, especially p. 9-15 where Baghdad is discussed in relationship with Shīᶜite scholars including the four agents of the twelfth Imām.

[89] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 245.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Banū Faḍḍāl were a group of the Shīᶜites who had become Fatḥites by accepting the Imāmate of Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī al-Hādī, the brother of al-ᶜAskarī. See al-Qummī Shaykh ᶜAbbās, al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb (Najaf, 1970), Vol. II/96; also Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 72f.

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[92]Tūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 239-240.

[93]op. cit., p. 255.

[94]al-Qur'ān, Surah III:179.

[95]al-Nuᶜmānī, Ghaybah, p. 91.

[96]Very little is known about this companion of the last two Imāms. But Ṭūsī seems to hold him in high esteem as the report shows in his Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 231.

[97]Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 231. Majlisī, op. cit., p. 1251.

[98]Majlisī, op. cit., fn. (2), p. 1251. Majlisī's text differs in the last part of the tradition cited. His text reads ᶜalayhim and not ᶜalaykum. This makes the mujtahid directly answerable to the Imām while people should follow the mujtahid.

[99]See the modern interpretation of the tradition on bayᶜah of the twelfth Imām in Navīd-i Amn u Amān of Ṣāfī Gulpāygānī (Qumm, 1349 A.H.) p. 174-75.

[100]A.K.S. Lambton in her article "A reconsideration of the position of the marjaᶜ al-taqlīd and the religious institutions," in Studia Islamica Vol. 20 p. 115 says, "In the absence of the Imām, all government, even if the holders of actual power were Shīᶜī, was regarded as unrighteous by the Shīᶜī divines." This is a much later interpretation which dates back to the Ṣafavid period, since those Imāmite jurists who wrote during or immediately after the Short Occultation do not mention anything about the unrighteousness of the government during the ghaybah. In fact the illegitimacy of any form of the government was maintained by all the Imāms before the twelfth Imām went into occultation. Both the Umayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids were known as ghāṣibīn (usurpers) of the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt, very much earlier than this period of the ghaybah. The reference made by Lambton in her article or by N. Keddie in her article entitled "The roots of the ᶜUlama's power in Iran" about the illegitimacy of any state (Studia Islamica, Vol. 29 p. 32) should be taken as the inevitable consequence of the evolution of the doctrine of al-Mahdī as al-Qā'im bi'l-Jihād, discussed in Chapter II.

[101]al-Qur'ān, Sūrah IV:59.

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[102]Lane, Lexicon, I/1 p. 344.

[103]This is the famous tradition known as Hadīth al-Ḥawḍ. Ḥawḍ is the pool or basin at which the Prophet will meet his ummah on the day of Judgement. For details on this subject see the article in E.I. 2nd Ed.

[104]al-Qur'ān, Sūrah XII:108.

[105]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I/151-153.

[106]His full name was ᶜAbd Rabbih Zurārah b. Aᶜyan (d. 150/767). Zurārah was his title. Aᶜyan, his father was a slave from Byzantium and belonged to a person from the Banū Shaybān. It was his master who taught him al-Qur'ān and then freed him and offered to accept him as one of his family. But Aᶜyan preferred to remain his friend. Aᶜyan's father was a monk in Byzantium. Zurārah himself had many sons and brothers who formed a large and well-known family of the Banū Zurārah. They were all reporters of several traditions and the authors of various works and compilations. Zurārah reported from the fourth, fifth and the sixth Imāms. Ṭūsī mentions a book written by him under the title of al-Istiṭāᶜah wa al-Jabr (Fihrist, p. 100). Al-Najāshī says, "he was a reciter (of al-Qur'ān), a jurisprudent, a theologian, a poet and a man of letters. In him were combined excellence of character, piety and truthfulness in what he reported." (Rijāl, p. 132f.).

Al-Kashshī mentions a tradition which is reported on the authority of the sixth Imām: "Had it not been for Zurārah, I think, the traditions of my father would have disappeared" (Ikhtiyār p. 133). With all these good reports about him, there are accounts which show that Zurārah had on some important issues contradicted the sixth Imām, having reported something different on the authority of the fifth Imām (Ikhtiyār, p. 136).

[107]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/157.

[108]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 63.

[109]al-Nuᶜmānī, op. cit., p. 111.

[110]op. cit., p. 100. Ibn Bābūyah, ᶜIlal al-Sharāyiᶜ, Vol. I/232.

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[111] Gulpaygānī, Ṣāfī, op. cit., p. 174.

[112] The story is narrated in the Qur'ān in Sūrah XVIII:60-82, in which al-Khiḍr finally tells Moses the interpretation of his strange behaviour. The story is used as a symbol of the delay in knowing the true reason behind the ghaybah, the reason for which will be known only when the Imām appears as was the case in the story.

[113] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/158.

[114] op. cit., Vol. I/127.

[115] op. cit., Vol. I/12-. Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 66.

[116] op. cit., Vol. I/182-183.

[117] loc. cit. Reference is to the boycott of the Quraysh before the Hijra.

[118] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., Vol. I/365.

[119] op. cit., Vol. I/176.

[120] al-Nuʿmānī, op. cit., 118.

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CHAPTER III

Part II

FOOTNOTES

[1] See the last part of his Kamāl al-Dīn, Bāb Nawādir al-Kitāb, which includes some kalām topics in crude form. Vol. II/370f.

[2] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 64.

[3] Aṣālah is an abstract noun derived from the form AṢL meaning firmness or soundness of judgement (Lisān al-ᶜArab /Beirut, 1955/, Vol. XI/16). But in this context the meaning seems to be something between authenticity and fundamentality, for which it is hard to find a single equivalent in English.

[4] al-Nufīd, al-Fuṣūl al-ᶜAsharah fī al-ghaybah (Najaf, 1951), p. 34 (Hereafter referred as al-Fuṣūl al-ᶜAsharah).

Al-Qūshjī, the Sunnite mutakallim, comments on this point, which is different from what al-Nufīd says. He says: "The appointment of the Imām according to us is wājib samᶜan; according to the Muᶜtazilites and Zaydites it is wājib ᶜaqlan; and according to al-Jāhiz (it is wājib) both ᶜaqlan and samᶜan; the Imāmiyyah and Ismāᶜiliyyah maintain that it is wājib on God (to appoint an Imām); the Khawārij say it is not wājib at all, ..." Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, Vol. III/262.

[5] al-Nufīd, op. cit., p. 34.

[6] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 64.

[7] See the introduction by the editor Sayyid Maḥmūd Zarandī (Tehrān, 1352 Shamsī), p. bā and jim.

[8] See First Discourse, Sixth Section, p. 51 (Trans. G. N. Nickens /London, 1964/).

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[9] ᶜIrāqī Maythamī, Thiqat al-Islām Shaykh Maḥmūd, Dār al-Salām (Tehrān, 1352 Sh.) p. 4.

[10] Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 59.

[11] al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Risālah fī al-Ghaybah, printed in the margins of Farā'id al-Uṣūl of Akhund, lith. 1302, p. 345.

[12] al-Asadābādī, Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah (Cairo, 1965), p. 510 (Hereafter referred as Sharḥ al-Uṣūl).

[13] The mutakallimūn, both the Muᶜtazilite and the Ashᶜarite divide knowledge into al-ḍarūrī (necessary or immediate) and al-naẓarī (that resulting from an inquiry) or muktasab (acquired) (al-Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 8; for the Imāmite position see al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 139). The ḍarūrī knowledge was the type of knowledge which did not depend on revelation; rather, it presented itself to the mind in an immediate form prior to revelation. The presentation of this type of knowledge was in such a way that the person attaining it had no choice but to accept it (al-Bāqillānī, Tamhīd (Beirut, 1957), p. 7f; al-Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 8; al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 136). The naẓarī or muktasab knowledge is the one which results from a process of discursive proofs (al-iktisāb bi al-naẓar). All the knowledge in the acquired sciences, including the knowledge of the Islamic Law, depends on rational proof. The Muᶜtazilites maintained that general ethical axioms were known by intuitive reason. Every rational person was capable of attaining them by the intellect and did not need revelation to explain to him what was immediately known. Thus they contended that good and evil were objective concepts and were rational categories which could be known through the ḍarūrī knowledge. The function of revelation was to supplement the difficulties experienced by human reason in the acknowledgement of good and evil. On the other hand the Ashᶜarites held that good and evil were subjective concepts whose validity depended on the revelation or something dependent on it in one way or another, such as the Sunnah, ijmāᶜ or qiyās (analogy) (al-Baghdādī, Uṣūl, p. 24f.; al-Shahrastānī, Milal, Vol. I/59f., al-Ḥillī, op. cit., p. 185).

[14] al-ᶜUthmān, ᶜAbd al-Karīm, Naẓariyyat al-Taklīf: arā' al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār (Beirut, 1971), p. 20.

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[15] sayyid also means descendant of the Prophet. In this context it means 'master' who owns slaves.

[16] al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 197.

[17] al-Asadābādī, al-Muḥīṭ bi al-Taklīf, Vol. I (Cairo, 1965), p. 283f.

[18] al-Shirāzī, Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Ḥusaynī, al-Qawl al-Sadīd fī Sharḥ al-Tajrīd (Najaf, 1961), p. 306 (Hereafter referred as al-Qawl al-Sadīd).

[19] The Imāmites are not alone in this. It is a point of departure for most of the Greek ethical and social thinkers. The Sunnites accept it all too. This may be compared with, for example, Avicenna, Healing: Metaphysics X, trans. M. E. Marmura in Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, eds., Medieval Political Philosophy (New York, 1963), p. 99f.

[20] al-Shirāzī, op. cit., p. 307.

[21] al-Ḥillī, op. cit., p. 197.

[22] al-Ḥillī, Ibn al-Muṭahhar, Anwār al-Malakūt fī Sharḥ al-Yāqūt (Tehrān Univ. Publication #543, 1338 Sh.), p. 151.

[23] al-Ghazālī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad, al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād (Ankara, 1962), p. 186 (Hereafter referred as al-Iqtiṣād).

[24] al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 199.

[25] al-Baghdādī, ʿAbd al-Qāhir, Kitāb Usūl al-Dīn (Istanbul, 1928), p. 207.

[26] al-Lāhījī, Mulla ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Gawhar-i Murād (Tehran, 1377), p. 248.

[27] al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 199.

[28] Ibid., p. 199f.

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[29]al-Lāhījī, op. cit., p. 250; Hourani, G. F., Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of ᶜAbd al-Jabbar (Oxford, 1971), p. 135f.

[30]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. II/375.

[31]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 60; al-Hillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī ᶜashaf, trans. W. M. Miller (London, 1928), p. 51.

[32]Ṭūsī, Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī fī al-Imāmah, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥru'l ᶜUlūm (Four Volumes, Najaf, 1963), Vol. I/90.

[33]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 65.

[34]Ibid., p. 68.

[35]al-Mufīd, Awā'il al-Maqālāt (Tabrīz, 1371), p. 26.

[36]Among the Muᶜtazilites Bishr b. al-Muᶜtamir and those who followed him among the Baghdādian Muᶜtazilites did not maintain luṭf to be incumbent on God. See al-Asadābadī, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl, p. 520.

[37]al-Ḥillī, Sharḥ al-Yāqūt, p. 151.

[38]al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. I/121.

[39]al-Ashᶜarī, Maqālāt, I/288.

[40]Ibid., p. 288.

[41]Ibid., p. 287.

[42]al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, p. 156.

[43]al-Ashᶜarī, op. cit., p. 287.

[44]Ibid., p. 287.

[45]Ibid., p. 288.

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[46] al-Asadābādī, Sharh al-Usūl, p. 519.

[47] al-Asadābādī, al-Mughnī, Vol. XXIII/12.

[48] Ibid., p. 17.

[49] Ibid., p. 15.

[50] al-Hillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 202.

[51] al-Shirāzī, al-Qawl al-Sadīd, p. 313f.

[52] al-Hillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 203.

[53] kaffārah: in the fiqh is explained as expiation or atonement for neglected duties or sins of omission and commission. In the Qur'ān two words are used to express the teaching of expiation: kaffārah and fidyah (ransom). Kaffārah occurs in the following verse: "God will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation (kaffārah), feed ten indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families; or clothe them; or give a slave his freedom. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths." (V:91, Yusufali's translation) Fidyah occurs in the following verse: "... But if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom (fidyah), the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will, -- it is better for him. And if ye fast, it is better for you, if ye only knew." (II:184) See al-ʿĀmilī, Muhammad b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī al-Shahīd al-Awwal, al-Lumʿah al-Damishqiyyah, Vol. III (Najaf, 1966), p. 11f.

[54] al-Hillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 203-4.

[55] al-Hillī, Ibn al-Mutahhar, al-Alfayn fī Imāmat Amīr al-Mu'minīn ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib (Najaf, 1969), p. 3 (Hereafter referred as al-Alfayn).

[56] loc. cit.

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[57]al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, al-Shāfī fī al-Imāmah (Lith. Tehran), p. 5.

[58] It might be alluded here to the traditional Christian distinction between "sanctifying" grace /a sort of general state of being on good terms with God/ and "actual" grace /which moves the believer to right actions/. See article "Grace, Doctrine of (Roman Catholic)" in the Ency. of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VI, p. 368-9.

[59]Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Fuṣūl al-ʿAqā'id (Baghdād, 1960) p. 18-19. See also al-Ḥillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī, p. 58.

[60]Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 19.

[61]ra'īs and riyāsah meaning 'leader' and 'leadership' are interchangeably used with the words imām and imāmah in the Shīʿī writings. See for example. Ṭūsī, K. al-Ghaybah, p. 3, 4, 5 ....

[62]al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, al-Shāfī, p. 4 and 5.

[63]Article kalām in the S.E.I., p. 212.

[64]A manuscript at the Āstānah-yi Quds Library in Mashhad (# a.q.l. Sh. 54). The date of the MS. is not known.

[65]Ṭūsī, al-Tamhīd fī al-Uṣūl, fol. 111.

[66]Ibid.; al-Asadābādī, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl, p. 520f. also considers the luṭf which occurs after taklīf only to be incumbent.

[67]al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, Vol. III/264.

[68]al-Asadābādī, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl, p. 750.

[69]al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtiṣād, p. 184 contends that it was not obligatory on God to bear in mind the most salutory for His servants; rather, God can act in any way He pleases.

[70]al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 202.

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[71] Ibid., p. 202f.

[72] Ibid., p. 203.

[73] Ṭūsī, Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī, Vol. I/89.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p. 106.

[76] Ibid., p. 106-7.

[77] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 11; al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 202.

[78] al-Asadābādī, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl, p. 751.

[79] al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 227.

[80] loc. cit.

[81] Ibid., p. 226.

[82] al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Risālah, p. 350f. See also al-Mufīd, al-Fuṣūl al-ᶜAsharah, p. 28.

[83] See above p.

[84] See above p.

[85] al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 217-18.

[86] Ibid., p. 217.

[87] Ibid.

[88] al-Mufīd, Taṣḥīḥ al-Iᶜtiqādāt (Tabrīz, 1371), p. 60f.

[89] Ibid., p. 62. See also al-Ḥillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī, p. 59.

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[90]al-Ḥillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī, p. 59.

[91]See Chapter I for various members of the Banū Hāshim who were proclaimed as Mahdī and the sources cited therein.

[92]Ibn Bābūyah, Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh, (Najaf, 1378) p. 74-75.

[93]al-Mufīd, Tashīḥ, p. 62.

[94]al-Mufīd, Awā'il al-Maqālāt, p. 35.

[95]al-Nu^{c}mānī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 118.

[96]al-Mufīd, al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtārah, I/19.

[97]al-Mufīd, op. cit., Vol. II/85. Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. I/ 176.

[98]Ṭūsī, Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī, Vol. I/71, fn. 2.

[99]al-Hillī, Bāb al-Hādī, p. 59. See also note on page 97.

[100]al-Mufīd, op. cit., Vol. II/85.

[101]al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, p. 229.

[102]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 16.

[103]al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Risālah, p. 346; Ṭūsī, op. cit., p. 15.

[104]al-Ḥillī, al-Alfayn, p. 8.

[105]al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, Risālah, p. 346.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid.

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[108] al-Mufīd, Awā'il al-Maqālāt, p. 99

[109] al-Qushjī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, Vol. III/266.

[110] al-Muẓaffar, Muḥammad Riḍā, Uṣūl al-Fiqh (Najaf, 1967), Vol. II/105.

[111] This was a group of people who were respected because of their age and ability to solve disputes in the Muslim society. In kalām, the phrase refers to those who established the caliphate of Abū Bakr and others. Here Ṭūsī is giving the definition according to the Sunnite view; his own definition will follow. See article Ahl al-Ḥall wa al-ᶜAqd in E.I. 2/11.

[112] al-Shahīd al-Thānī al-ᶜĀmilī, Zayn al-Dīn b. Nūr al-Dīn (b. 911/1505-6, d. 965/1557-58), Maᶜālim al-ᶜUlamā' (Tehran, 1320), p. 174.

[113] al-Anṣārī, Shaykh Murtaḍā b. Muḥammad Amīn (b. 1214/1799-800, d. 1281/1864-65), Rasā'il (Lith. Tabrīz, 1302), p. 40.

[114] al-ḥiss: The term basically means 'the sense' i.e. the five senses taken collectively, or 'the faculty of sensory perception'. But as a term used in theological and philosophical writings, it is the source by which knowledge is produced in us. Our soul begins to know by the way of senses. When the sensible faculty perceives the sensible object, the figure and apparent form of the latter are actualized in that faculty (Goichon, A. M., Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne) /Paris, 1938/ p. 68f). The knowledge attained by the sensible faculty is different from that which is attained by experience. Al-Ghazālī gives an example to demonstrate this difference thus: "When the sun rises the stars disappear. This is known by experience. Then you say: 'It is evident that the Sun has arisen.' This is apprehended by the sense." (Jabr, Essai sur le lexique de Ghazālī /Beyrouth, 1940/, p. 64). The term also indicates the principle of intellectual knowledge, since the perceptual activity is not perceived by perception but by intellectual process (Avicenna's De Anima, ed. F. Rahman, /London, 1959/, p. 67). In this context a judgement arrived at by ijmāᶜ by this method implies that the faqīh investigates the situation as it presents itself to his sensible faculty, especially the visible and the audible senses and then arrives at a conclusion about its being authentic or not.

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[115] al-Muẓaffar, Uṣūl al-Fiqh, II/107. al-Anṣārī, Rasā'il, p. 42.

[116] al-Muẓaffar, op. cit., II/108.

[117] al-Anṣārī, op. cit., p. 42.

[118] Ṭūsī, Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī, Vol. I/74f.

[119] Ibid.

[120] al-ḥads: In Ibn Sīnā's usage the term means the intellectual intuition as opposed to mushāhadah which is sensible intuition. It is a flash of comprehension which is produced in the mind, discovering for it suddenly a hitherto unperceived truth. It is also defined as an act of the mind that discovers by itself the middle term of a syllogism (Goichon, Lexique, p. 65). But the word is above all used in regard to fiqh, as al-Ghazālī says: that which corroborates the ḥads of the muftī when the latter is in doubt concerning a matter pertaining to fiqh; provided he has the right perceptivity (dhawq) in fiqh, it is impossible that he would submit to the conditions of dialectic reasoning in most cases (Jabr, Essai, p. 62-3). The term then designates the personal, approximate appraisement of the faqīh. In this sense it is synonym of the term ijtihād which means independent estimation of the faqīh in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the four sources of Islamic Law: the Qur'ān Sunnah, ijmāᶜ and qiyās (analogy). This is the peculiarity of the modern Imāmite doctors who are above all known as 'mujtahids' (i.e. those practising ijtihād in matters pertaining fiqh).

[121] al-Muẓaffar, op. cit., I/108.

[122] Ibid., p. II/113.

[123] al-Hillī, Ibn al-Muṭahhar, Mabādi' al-Uṣūl ilā ᶜilm al-Uṣūl (Najaf, 1970), p. 190.

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CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

[1] al-Tirmidhī, al-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth 52. See also Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, I/396 for the variants of this ḥadīth.

[2] Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, II/226f. has a whole section devoted to the ghaybah of the prophets and their awṣiyā'.

[3] In the Shī^{c}ī hagiography al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom is interpreted as the consummation of the endeavours of all the prophets from Adam to Muḥammad. Similarly, in the reappearance of al-Mahdī the mission of all prophets will be consummated. For the role of al-Ḥusayn's suffering in the Shī^{c}ī piety see a detailed study of this aspect in unpublished Ph.D. thesis entitled "The Concept of Redemptive Suffering in Islām: A study of the devotional aspects of ^{c}Āshūrā' in Twelver Shī^{c}īsm in the Middle Ages, by Mahmoud Ayoub, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (March, 1975).

[4] Ibn Bābūyah, op. cit., II/362f. discusses various signs in the chapter dealing with ^{c}Alāmāt khurūj al-Qā'im.

[5] al-Khuzā^{c}ī, Di^{c}bil b. ^{c}Alī, Di^{c}bil b. ^{c}Alī: The Life and Writings of an early ^{c}Abbāsid poet, ed. and tr. by L. Zolondek (Kentucky, 1961), p. 25, 99. I have made some amendments to L. Zolondek's translation.

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APPENDIX I

Books on the subject of Ghaybah

One of the most important discussions in the Imāmite dogmatic texts is the question of the ghaybah, the occultation of the twelfth Imām, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-ᶜAskarī, in the different epochs of Imāmite history. The problem of ghaybah is very old. According to 3rd/9th and 4th/10th century texts, such as Books on Milal, the term 'Mahdī' was officially applied to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah (81/700-701), who was also the hidden Imām. The Imāmites report a number of traditions attributed to the Prophet himself about the ghaybah of the Mahdī, who will be among his progeny (Ahl al-Bayt). Similarly, all other Imāms have been reported to have related traditions on this subject.[1] From the existing Imāmite or non-Imāmite sources, it can be discerned that the discussion on the Mahdī and the account of his ghaybah seem to have been recognized topics of discussion during the lifetime of the Imāmite Imāms. It can be maintained on the basis of the evidence that the idea of ghaybah was so prevalent among Muslims that one of the signs of the Mahdī was considered to be the ghaybah. For example, those who were held to be the Mahdī, or whose Mahdiism was probable, were also proclaimed to be al-ghā'ib, that is, the one in occultation. The Imām Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar, known as al-Kāẓim (183/799-800), was considered as Mahdī and in ghaybah by the

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Wāqifites.[2] Again, according to Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī, Muḥammad b. ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, from his very early years lived in concealment and was named Mahdī.[3]

Consequently, from time to time we come across several ᶜAlids who were considered to be in ghaybah, and in the minds of the people in those days, it seems, the phenomenon was not far-fetched.

Besides the traditions, whether authentic or fabricated, which helped towards development of the idea of ghaybah, there probably were some other factors which accelerated its systematization. Al-Kashshī, one of the Imāmite biographers, in his account of the origins of the Wāqifite idea of Mahdiism and the ghaybah of the seventh Imām, Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799-800), reports that at the time when this Imām was imprisoned by Hārūn al-Rashīd, an amount of thirty thousand dīnars had been deposited with his two agents in Kūfah. One of these agents was Ḥayyān al-Sarrāj who, together with the other agent, had spent this amount in buying houses and trading, and had made a considerable profit. When Mūsā al-Kāẓim died and the news reached them, in the fear that the money might be reclaimed from them, they denied his death and spread the story that the Imām had not died, and could not die, because he was the Qā'im, and he had disappeared.[4] It emerges from this story that the idea of ghaybah may possibly have been utilised by those agents who wanted to benefit from the material wealth which otherwise could have been claimed by the succeeding Imām.

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Be that as it may, the idea was fully developed after the ghaybah of the twelfth Imāmite Imām.

Books on this subject were written from the time of Mūsā al-Kāẓim. We have a record of several books written on the subject of ghaybah in the genre of biographical literature known as 'Books of the Notable Men' (kutub al-rijāl), but very few of these have come down to us. The following three works, written before the ghaybah of the Imāmite Imām, are examples of this type of literature:

1. al-Ṭātarī, ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Tā'ī, who was one of the companions of Mūsā al-Kāẓim. He wrote a book on Ghaybah. The author has been reported to have been a renowned jurist and reliable authority on the transmission of ḥadīth.[5]

2. Abū Ḥamzah al-Ḥasan b. ᶜAlī, a contemporary of the eighth Imāmite Imām, ᶜAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 202/817-18), wrote a book on Ghaybah.[6]

3. Faḍl b. Shādhān al-Nayshābūrī, a highly esteemed jurist, wrote a book on al-Qā'im and the Ghaybah. Ṭūsī mentions him among the close associates of the tenth and eleventh Imāmite Imāms.[7] He died in the year 260/873-4, the year in which the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām begins. Sayyid Mīr Lawḥī, the contemporary of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, claimed to have possessed a copy of Ibn Shādhān's book on Ghaybah.[8]

It could be plausibly maintained that each Imāmite Imām in his own time used to relate traditions on the Mahdī and to consider his miraculous birth and his ghaybah as the

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two basic signs of his claim to this title. The reports which have come down to us show that the Imāms before the twelfth Imām used to disclaim the title Mahdī or differentiate their Mahdiism from that of the Promised Mahdī (al-Mahdī al-Mawᶜūd). For instance, ᶜAbd Allāh b. ᶜAṭā, a companion of the fifth Imām al-Bāqir, relates that:

> Once I asked the Imām al-Bāqir, "Given the fact that you have a large number of followers (Shīᶜah), why do not you rise against the tyranny /of the Umayyads/?". In reply he said, "O ᶜAbd Allāh, do not let these nonsensical ideas get into your mind. I solemnly swear that I am not the Promised Mahdī. Look for someone who is going to be born in secret. He is the Ṣāḥib al-Amr."[9]

In the Ithbāt al-Waṣiyyah, which is alleged to have been written by the historian al-Masᶜūdī (d. 344/955-56), there is an account indicating a gradual development of the complete ghaybah of the twelfth Imām. The account describes the way Imām al-Hādī, the tenth Imām, used rarely to mix with the people, and was not in contact with anyone except his immediate family and associates. When Imām al-ᶜAskarī, the eleventh Imām, succeeded him, most of the time he used to talk with the Shīᶜites behind a curtain so that they should prepare themselves for the occultation of the twelfth Imām.[10]

Among the books written after the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, five are worth mentioning. These five works show very clearly the development of the traditions on ghaybah into a highly technical dogmatic theology on the one hand, and on the other they give a picture of the Imāmite history during this epoch.

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1. al-Nuᶜmānī, Ibrāhīm b. Jaᶜfar, known as Ibn Abī Zaynab, has left a book entitled Kitāb al-Ghaybah. Al-Nuᶜmānī was one of the pupils of the well-known Imāmite compiler of the Imāmite ḥadīth, al-Kulaynī, who died in 329/940-1, during the Short Occultation (al-ghaybat al-qaṣīrah) of the twelfth Imām. The book, which is devoid of any detailed discussion or defence of faith, gives only a faint picture of the period during which it was written. The number of Imāmite Shīᶜites seems to have been very small and very few had recognized the Imāmate of the twelfth Imām.[11] These few were living in taqiyyah and were avoiding discussing their creed or criticizing other sects. Al-Nuᶜmānī has contented himself with mentioning a number of traditions about the twelve Imāms, to the effect that the earth cannot be empty of an Imām, and some others relating to the ghaybah of the last Imām. Occasionally, he has defended the Imāmite position, but very mildly. Thus, for example, after relating a tradition in praise of ghaybah he gives a very short answer to the objection of his contemporaries: "People are asking, "Where is the successor of Imām al-Ḥasan /al-ᶜAskarī/ and until when is he going to remain in occultation? As it is, eighty and some years of his life have already passed." Some say he is dead; others do not accept the fact of his birth at all and mock those who maintin his Imāmate. They think the age of eighty improbable, and do not realize that God has the power to lengthen the age of His walī. We have witnessed people living for hundred

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years or even more, with all their senses and their strength in normal order."[12]

As time passed by the ghaybah became prolonged, the number of the believers in the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām increased and their need for taqiyyah decreased. Consequently, they openly came out to vindicate their position against an increasing number of enemies from within and without. This is the time when Ibn Bābūyah (d. 381/991-2) wrote his work on the ghaybah.

2. Ibn Bābūyah, Muḥammad b. ᶜAlī, known as al-Ṣadūq, died in the year 381/991-992. He wrote his Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Niᶜmah on the subject of ghaybah.[13] The work seems to have been written during the last years of his life -- the time when the Imāmites were under attack from the Ismāᶜīlites, who had become a powerful sect by that time; the Zayditas; the followers of Jaᶜfar, the brother of al-ᶜAskarī, the eleventh Imām and the claimant to the office of Imāmate after him; and the Sunnites. As a result, Ibn Bābūyah undertook to write this book in which he replied to the objections made by all these sects, and attempted to vindicate the Imāmite doctrine of ghaybah and the Imāmah. Thus the book not only deals with the Shīᶜite tenets but also provides a reader with a detailed picture of the discussions between the various sects and the relationship between them in the fourth century of the Hijra (tenth A.D.).

3. al-Mufīd, Muḥammad b. Nuᶜmān (d. 413/1022-23). By the time al-Mufīd came forward to defend the doctrine of

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al-Mahdī and his ghaybah, the objections to this doctrine had become more severe. By this time, not only the question of ghaybah but also the Imāmate itself was under attack. In fact, the whole question of the Imāmate had become a very sensitive issue. By this time the Imāmites had already developed their kalām to the utmost. Al-Mufīd wrote several works on Imāmah and ghaybah on dogmatic lines, that is using the formula "if they say this .... we say ...." His work on Ghaybah, which I have been able to consult, is entitled al-Fusūl al-ᶜAsharah fī al-ghaybah. In ten concise fasls (chapters) al-Mufīd has presented all the important issues connected with the necessity of ghaybah, the reason behind the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, the benefits gained from the Imām during his ghaybah and so on. Ṭūsī in his List of the Shīᶜī books mentions several other titles on this topic[14] which have not apparently been preserved.

4. After al-Mufīd, the responsibility of defending the Imāmite doctrine of ghaybah fell on his pupil, the great mutakallim Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044-45). He wrote a book on ghaybah entitled al-Muqniᶜ.[15] Al-Murtaḍā is more renowned for his al-Shāfī fī al-Imāmah which he wrote in reply to al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār's criticism of the Imāmate in his al-Mughnī.[16] I have not been able to trace al-Muqniᶜ in Iran so far. In Najaf, Iraq, I was told that a manuscript copy of this work exists in the museum attached to the shrine of ᶜAlī b. Abī Ṭālib; but I was not permitted to consult this work by

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the Kilīd-dār (the Keeper) of the shrine. The only work of al-Murtaḍā available on this subject is a treatise under the title of Risālat al-Ghaybah. In al-Shāfī al-Murtaḍā does embark on the question of ghaybah when he discusses Imāmah, but the Risālah treats the subject exclusively.

5. The fifth and the most important of all works on the ghaybah is the book by Ṭūsī, who after Sharīf al-Murtaḍā was acknowledged as the leading theologian and his successor as the head of the Imāmites. The Imāmite sect was well-known by this time and the discussion on the Imāmate had reached its full development. In Baghdād the works of al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍā and Ṭūsī were in wide circulation. Ṭūsī was held in high esteem even by the Sunnites.[17] The ᶜAbbāsid caliph al-Qā'im (d. 1075) had appointed him as a kalām professor in Baghdād.[18] The conditions, therefore, were to a great extent favourable for the Imāmites and persons like Ṭūsī wrote extensive works on Imāmite theology and jurisprudence. Among his various works is a book entitled Kitāb al-Ghaybah. In the introduction of this work he writes: "The great Shaykh [al-Mufīd] ordered me to write a book on ghaybah [of the twelfth Imām] and explain the reason of its prolongation, and reply to the doubts of those who oppose the idea of ghaybah."[19] The other point which is evident from his introduction is that during the last years of his life conditions had changed considerably and he had fallen out of ᶜAbbāsid favour and had even migrated to Najaf.[20] All this is reflected in his severe

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attacks on the Sunnites, Ismā^{c}īlites, Zaydites and others who had put forward as Mahdī someone other than the twelfth Imām and claimed ghaybah for him.

After Ṭūsī's Kitāb al-Ghaybah there are several other works written on this subject, but the five works mentioned above remain standard works on this doctrine. All later authors have based their works on them, and have added very little to them.

The following two are examples of the later works on ghaybah:

1. Ṭabarsī Nūrī, Mirzā Ḥusayn, Najm al-Thāqib dar aḥwālāt-i Imām-i ghāyib.

2. ^{c}Irāqī Maythamī, Thiqat al-Islām Shaykh Mahmūd, Dār al-Salām.

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Notes on Appendix I

[1]Ibn Bābūyah, Kamāl al-Dīn, Vol. 1/403f.

[2]All works on Milal mention this tenet of the Wāqifites.

[3]al-Iṣfahānī, Maqātil, p. 222f.

[4]al-Kashshī, Ikhtiyār, p. 459f. In his Kitāb al-Ghaybah Ṭūsī relates the same story as a reason for their waqf.

[5]al-Najashī, Kitāb al-Rijāl, p. 193. See also al-Kashshī, op. cit., p. 357 and Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 118.

[6]al-Najashī, op. cit., p. 29; Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 75.

[7]Ṭūsī, Rijāl, p. 420 and 434.

[8]Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, al-Dharī^{c}ah, Vol. XVI 82. Sayyid Mīr Lawḥī has a book entitled Kifāyat al-Muhtadī fī Ma^{c}rifat al-Mahdī in which he mentions forty ḥadīths on the authority of Ibn Shādhān. MS. Tehrān Univ. Lib.

[9]al-Nu^{c}mānī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 87.

[10]Mas^{c}udi, Ithbāt al-Wasiyyah li ^{c}Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, trans. into Persian by Muḥammad Jawād Najafī (Tehrān, 1343), p. 507.

[11]al-Nawbakhtī, Firaq, p. 132.

[12]al-Nu^{c}mānī, op. cit., p. 80.

[13]Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 185 mentions Kitāb al-Ghaybah al-Kabīr; al-Najāshī mentions several works dealing with al-Mahdī, which now seem to have been collected under Kamāl al-Dīn, 305f.

[14]Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 187.

[15]al-Najāshī, op. cit., p. 207; Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 125.

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[16] Ṭūsī, Fihrist, p. 125.

[17] See Wāᶜiẓ-zadah al-Khurāsānī's introduction to Ṭūsī's Jumal wa al-ᶜUqud (Mashhad, 1969), p. 25.

[18] See Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī's introduction to Ṭūsī's Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 5.

[19] Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, p. 2.

[20] al-Shūstarī, Qādī Nūr Allāh, Majālis al-Mu'minīn (Lith. Tehrān, 1219 A.H.), fifth majlis.

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APPENDIX II

Index of the Imām and the Imāmate in al-Kulaynī's Kitāb al-Ḥujjah in al-Kāfī

(The first number indicates the Bāb and the second number the ḥadīth.)

The Creation of the Imāms:

- created in the best shape and form, 11/6;
- like the prophets created from special matter, 94/2;
- birth described, 93/1;
- conception described, 93/1;
- after the fortieth day of conception listen to what is said, 93/2;
- before conception the preceding Imām is sent heavenly syrup through an angel which he drinks, 93/3;
- born pure and circumcised, 93/5;
- the mother of the Imām-to-be-born experiences light and noises before the birth of the Imām, 93/5;
- ten signs of the Imām when he is born and after he is in this world, 93/8;
- created from ʿilliyīn (sublime matter) and their spirits created from a matter above that, 94/1;
- created from the light (al-nūr) which shows the greatness of God, 94/1;
- lived under the great shadow before anything else

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was created, glorifying God, 111/7;

- do not become muḥtalim (experiences an emission of (one who the seminal fluid in sleep) in their sleep, 124/12;

The Acknowledgement of the Imams:

- No one will enter Paradise without /acknowledging the Imām/ -- and no one will be put into the Fire except those who will have refused to recognize them, 7/9;

- those who do not acknowledge them are in darkness, 7/13;

- should be acknowledged, whether he appears now or later, 84/1;

- the one who dies without acknowledging his Imām dies a death of ignorance (jāhiliyyah), 84/5;

- all /the twelve/ must be acknowledged, and not the last or the first one only, 85/7;

- the one who has not acknowledged the living Imām has not acknowledged the past ones too, 85/8;

- acknowledgement of the righteous Imām is like possessing the light of Islam, 86/3;

- acknowledgement of the Imām crucial, 87/1;

- Imāms from the descendants of ᶜAlī and Fāṭimah should be acknowledged, 88/1;

- those who do not acknowledge the one from among the descendants of Fāṭimah will be punished twice as much (for their sins) as those who do, 88/2;

The Imām and his successor:

- The Imām: hands over the Books, knowledge and the

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weapons to his successor, 59/1;

- does not die without seeing his successor to whom he entrusts the tokens of the Imāmate, 59/5;

- does not become an Imām without having a son to succeed him, 73/4;

- in case of his death, it is obligatory on the people to look for his successor, 89/1;

- in case of his death those who are in distant lands should make every effort to travel to the place of the last Imām's residence and find out his successor, 89/2;

- his successor may be known in the same manner as ᶜAlī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were known, 89/2;

- his successor can be known by three signs, 89/2;

- his successor can be recognized by his outstanding personality, 89/3;

- knows about his Imāmate when the preceding Imām is dying; and if he is away he knows about his succession by inspiration from God, 90/4;

- his dead body is washed by his successor, a tradition established by Moses, 92/2;

- does not die before appointing a successor to the Imāmate, 99/1;

The Imāms and their followers:

- The Imāms: know their helpers by looking at their countenance, since they are al-Aᶜrāf (the elevated places) mentioned in the Qur'ān, 7/9;

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- their opponents will not receive the intercession of the Prophet, 19/3;

- know their followers whether they are truly believers or hypocrites, 33/1;

- there exists a mīthāq (covenant) between them and their followers made by God, 33/1;

- knew all that was going to befall their followers but since they would not control their tongues, the Imāms refrained from revealing it, 51/1;

- like their followers to speak when they speak and to keep quiet when they keep quiet, 52/1;

- make it lawful for their followers to benefit from that which belongs to them, 105/3;

- whatever belongs to them, belongs to their followers, 105/5;

- will make shafāᶜah (intercession) for their followers on the day of Judgement, 108/91;

- know when their Shīᶜah will die, 120/7;

- accept dirhams in order to purify the wealth of their followers, 129/7;

The Imāms and the Prophets:

- The Imāms: compared with the Prophet, 3/1;

- in them is the tradition of past prophets and the Prophet, 11/4;

- are the signs /celestial/ (ᶜalāmāt) and the Prophet is the star, 17/1;

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- in their bodies run the Prophet's spirit; their blood and flesh is the Prophet's blood and flesh, 19/4;

- the names and the names of their fathers and the names of their devotees revealed to the Prophet through Gabriel, 19/4;

- the Prophet will complain against those who refused to recognize their excellence and severed relations with them, 19/5;

- are the rāsikhūn fī al-ᶜilm (firmly founded in knowledge), but the Prophet is superior to them in this respect, 22/2;

- ᶜAlī, among the Imāms, was taught by the Prophet in accordance with the command of God, 49/1;

- used to stop people who thought they were prophets, 53/2;

- are not prophets but resemble the close associates of the Prophet, 53/1, 4;

- are the learned but not prophets, 53/5;

- have the status of the Prophet but are not the prophets and the number of wives lawful to the Prophet were not lawful to them, 53/7;

- endowed with five souls like prophets, 55/2;

- ᶜAlī and the Prophet hold a special excellence over the rest of the Imāms in comprehending the Law, 58/3;

- their wilāyah (devotion, love) elucidated by the Prophet, 64/4;

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- entrusted with the knowledge, the faith, the ism al-akbar (the greatest name) and the knowledge of the prophets by the Prophet, 65/2;

- their rights acknowledged by all the prophets, 109/4;

- and the Prophet created from the light, that is, spirit without body before anything was created, 111/3;

- and the Prophet created first in order to bear witness over the entire creation, 111/5;

- and the Prophet supported by the angel Gabriel when in the light form, 111/10;

- will be from al-Husayn's descendants, according to the tidings given to the Prophet, 111/4.

The Knowledge of the Imām:

- The Imām: the ʿālim, on whom depends the knowledge of truth and falsehood; 5/5;

- the treasurer of God's knowledge in heavens and on the earth, 11/2;

- knows the inner meanings of the Qur'ān, 22/1;

- endowed with the knowledge which is firmly established in his breast, 23/1;

- possesses such knowledge that it increases from day to day and from hour to hour, 33/3, 4;

possesses the knowledge of the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms and the exegesis of that which was revealed on the Tablets, 33/3, 4;

- inherited the knowledge of the Prophet and the

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Qur'ān, 33/7;

- inherited all the revealed books in their original languages and knows how to read them as they were /originally/ read and how to interpret them, 34/1;

- speaks other languages besides Arabic, 34/2;

- collected the whole Qur'ān as it was revealed, in chronological order, 35/1;

- only can claim to possess the knowledge of all that is manifest and hidden in the Qur'ān, 35/2, 107/3;

- possesses the knowledge of the Book, 35/5;

- endowed with the knowledge of the exegesis and the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the changes that will take place and the events that will occur, 35/3, 41/1;

- possesses al-Jāmiᶜah, al-Jafr, and Mushaf Fāṭimah,[1] 40/1;

- being the ḥujjah, possesses the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān, 41/1;

- his knowledge increases every Thursday night, 43/1, 2, 3;

- before being endowed with any new knowledge, that knowledge is first given to the Prophet, who then passes it on to him, 43/3;

- equal in knowledge, and no Imām is more learned than the other, 43/4;

- receives all the knowledge of God which He bestows on the angels, prophets and apostles, and the knowledge of badā'

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(a change in the divine ruling caused by the emergence of new circumstances)[2], 44/1;

- can know whenever he wishes to, 46/1, 2;

- is informed by God what he intends to know, 46/3;

- as a hujjah from God must possess the knowledge of the future, 47/1;

- inherited the knowledge of futre events from the Prophet, 48/1;

- is equipped with not only the knowledge of al-halāl and al-harām but also with kalām (ability to engage in theological argument), 48/5;

- more learned than Moses and al-Khidr who possessed the knowledge of the past only, 48/1;

- his knowledge is impressed upon his heart in the form of inspiration, and in his ears through an angel, 50/3;

- inherited from ᶜAlī besides the Prophet, his knowledge about the past which he explained, in regard to the future which he wrote, and in regard to the present sometimes impressed on his heart and at other times spoken into his ears, 50/1;

- his knowledge from three directions: past, present and future, 50/1;

- his knowledge due to the power of Ruh al-Qudus (Gabriel), 55/2;

- receives the knowledge of the preceding Imām in the last moments of the latter's life, 57/1;

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- perceives the knowledge of the preceding Imām as long as the spirit of the latter remains with him, 57/2;

- all equal in the method of comprehending the Religious Law but the Prophet and ᶜAlī hold a special status, 58/3;

- can talk to his followers in their own languages, 62/7;

- can inform about what is going to happen the next day, 62/7;

- his knowledge of the ḥalāl and ḥarām is the proof in support of his Imāmate, 62/2;

- his knowledge, a crucial sign in his claim to the Imāmate, 81/6;

- the source of the knowledge of the Prophet, 100/1;

- endowed with a secret from the secrets of God, knowledge from the knowledge of God, 102/5;

- denied possession of the knowledge of hidden things, 107/1;

- denied the knowledge of hidden things but were informed about anything they wished to know, 107/4;

The Characteristics of the Imām:

- The Imām: resembles the heart in the body (Hishām b. al-Ḥakam's discussion with the Muᶜtazilite ᶜAmr b. ᶜUbayd), 1/3;

- the necessity of -, 1/3;

- there can be only one Imām at a time - unless the other be al-ṣāmit (the silent), 5/1;

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earth cannot be void of -, 5/1;

- guides people toward God, 5/8;

- ḥujjah of God, 5/9;

earth can be without - only if God is wrathful with the people, 5/11, 13;

his right is inspired by God to the believers, 7/3;

- after the Prophet, 7/5;

- necessary for acceptance of prayers, 7/8;

without - a person is like sheep without a shepherd, 7/8;

- the Bāb ('Gate'), Ṣirāt (way), Sabīl (path) and Wajh (contenance, meaning favour)[3] of God to lead the people towards Him, 7/9;

- the aᶜraf through whom God can be known, 7/9;

- resembles the clear spring which flows at the command of God, 7/9;

- the guide (dalīl) to give directions, 7/10;

- the light towards which people walk, 7/13;

to - belongs anfāl (the booty etc.) and ṣafw al-māl (the best portion of the booty which goes to the chief), 8/6;

- the firmly rooted in knowledge, 8/6;

- the ᶜālim of the ummah, 8/14;

- the witness of God to His creatures, 9/1;

- the witness to people, and the Prophet witness to - to what he has delivered to - from God, 9/2;

- witness of God, indirectly, 9/2;

- the chosen one, 9/4;

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- with the Qur'ān and the Qur'ān with -, 9/5;

- pure and immune to sin before being made the witness and the hujjah, 9/5;

- the Hādī (Guide) for the ummah, 10/1;

- the Hādī for the century in which he lives, 10/1;

- walī al-amr (responsible for the command), the keeper of His knowledge, 11/1;

- the interpretater of the revelation of God, 11/3;

- the Hujjat al-Bālighah (i.e. the Hujjah which has reached the people)[4] for all under the sky and on earth, 11/3;

- his name and his father's name given to the Prophet, 11/4;

bi/ - the Qā'im/al-Amr (one who upholds the Command), 11/5;

had - not been created God would not have been worshipped, 11/6;

God makes the tree to speak for -, 11/6;

- from the household of the Prophet is the light of God, 13/1;

- the revealed nur, 13/1;

- his love and the effects it can produce on the lovers of -, 13/1;

- the pillars of earth, 14/1;

not recognizing the right of - results into being drifted away from the right path, 14/3;

- all equal in status, 14/3;

- the support of Islam and the link to the path of guidance, 14/3;

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- can be found only among Ahl al-Bayt, 15/1;
- resembles raincloud in blessings and kindness, 15/1;
through - the religious endeavours are accomplished, 15/1;
- the pure one endowed with knowledge and faith, 15/1;
- from the progeny of al-Batūl (the Virgin, i.e. Fāṭimah), 15/1;
- the infallible, confirmed, divinely aided and guided, 15/1;
- envied for what God has favoured him with, 16/2;
- the signs mentioned by God in the Qur'ān, 17/1;
- the truthful mentioned in the Qur'ān, 19/1;
to be with - has been made obligatory by God, 19/2;
- his love the cause for salvation, 19/4;
- the Ahl al-Dhikr (those distinguished by eminence and nobility)[5] in the Qur'ān, 20/1;
- the one who possesses knowledge, 21/1;
- referred as "those who know" in the Qur'ān, 21/1;
- the foremost in goodness, 24/1;
- two kinds: one calling people to Paradise and the other calling people to the Fire, 25/1;
- the blessing of God through whom people will attain reward on the day of Judgement, 27/1;
- the one who thinks carefully, 28/1;
- presented with the deeds of the slaves of God, 29/2;
- upholding his wilāyah leads to great reward, 30/2;

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- the mine of knowledge, the tree of the Prophecy, the frequenting place of the angels, 31/1, 3;

- the closest to the Qur'ān and the Prophet, 33/1;

-given seventy-two out of seventy-three letters of al-Ism al-Aᶜẓam (the most esteemed name /of God/)[6], 36/3;

- possesses all the tokens of the past prophets, 37/1;

- inherited the Tablets of Moses and his rod, 37/2;

- possesses the name which the Prophet used to invoke at the time of battle between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, 38/1;

- inherited the sword, the banner, the shield, the coat of mail and the helmet of the Prophet, 38/1;

- possesses the sacrificial basin of Moses, 38/1;

- the warner (nadhīr) after the Prophet, 41/6;

the spirit of - gets permission to visit the spirits of the past prophets on Thursday night, 42/1;

the sufferings of -, 48/4;

the sufferings of - destined by God, 48/4;

- the link between God and people, 52/1;

- practised taqiyyah (prudential concealment) under certain circumstances, 52/2;

- entrusted with that which was entrusted to the Prophet by God, 52/2;

- will judge according to the Book, 52/8;

- the interpreter of the command of God, whose obedience has been made incumbent, 53/6;

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- receives knowledge from a hidden source, 54/3;

- hears the voice of an angel but does not see him, thus he is muḥaddath (inspired), 54/4;

- protected by the Rūḥ, 56/4;

- acted according to the instructions laid down in the waṣiyyah (testament)[7], 61/1;

- revolted or chose political quietism in accordance with the waṣiyyah, 61/3;

- informed of the time he would die by the Prophet who appears in his dream, 61/5;

- possesses a note-book (ṣaḥīfah) which outlines the the course of events connected with him during his term as an Imām, 61/5;

three proofs for the claim of - to the Imāmate, 62/2;

- cannot be defamed with wicked deeds, 62/3;

signs of -, 62/4;

- al-Qā'im in relation to each other, 70/7;

- does not indulge in amusement and pleasure-seeking, 71/15;

- sees with the light of God and listens with the understanding endowed by God, 72/14;

- alone washes the dead body of the preceding Imām, 72/14;

- respected even when he dies by the reading of the takbīr (i.e. the saying of Allāh Akbar /God is the great/) nine times instead of five in the funeral prayers, 72/14;

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- inherits the Imāmate even if very young, 73/2;

- cannot be two /imāms/ at one time, 73/7;

- removed when God is enraged with the people, 90/31;

- should be able to make impression on stone, 81/3;

- the hidden meaning of the which is lawful in the Qur'ān, 85/10;

for - God erects a minaret in every city from where he watches the deeds of the slaves of God to present them to God, 93/3, 4;

- should be contacted after the ḥajj and referred to in regard to the religious difficulties, 96/1;

- frequented by the angels who are more kind /than people in general/ to the children of the Imām, 97/1;

- also Imām to the jinn, who come and ask - their religious difficulties, 98/1;

jinn work for - when there is urgency about a matter, 98/4;

- will rule according to the command of God and the method set down by David, 99/3;

- encourages unity among the Muslims, 103/4;

- his right, which is incumbent on the people, is that he be listened /and obeyed, 104/1; /to

- the father of the orphans, 104/5;

- responsible for the repayment of any debts left by a believer, provided his debt was not for any corrupt reason, 104/7;

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to - belongs all the land because he has inherited it according to the covenant of God, 105/1;

- must receive the kharāj on all land cultivated by the Muslims, 105/1;

does - pay zakāt? 105/4;

to - belongs all the fresh waters on earth, 105/5;

- extremely simple in his food and clothes so that the poor /thereby/ get a consolation /from seeing him like themselves/, 106/1;

- his simplicity is because of his position as a righteous man, 106/3;

when - sneezes those who are present must say, "May God bless you", 107/1;

- warns with the help of the verses of the Qur'ān, as did the Prophet, 108/61;

- gives the tidings of al-Qā'im's appearance, 108/83;

- knows a person by looking at him whether he has true faith or is a hypocrite, 110/2;

- replies to each person according to his comprehending capacity, 110/3;

to - belongs the treasures on earth, 119/4;

- twelve in number, in accordance with the tradition of Jesus, who had twelve apostles, 126/10;

- if considered as al-Qā'im and if his son proves to be the one, it is because of the will of God, 127/2;

- all are al-Qā'im, al-Mahdī, Ṣāḥib al-Sayf,[8] Wārith al-Sayf, 128/1;

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- does not need what the people possess, rather the people need what - possesses, 129/1;

khums[9] payable to - on all that is in earth and under the sea, if used with the permission of the Imām, 130/1;

The Imāmate:

- more important than prophethood, 2/2, 4;

- is the light, 13/6;

- the part of the completion of Religion as revealed to the Prophet at the end of his mission, 15/1;

- part of the Prophet's mission on earth without which religion would not have been perfected, 15/1;

- cannot be based on the principle of ikhtiyār (choice by election), since the ummah is not aware of the importance of -, 15/1;

- a position which Abraham attained after his prophethood, 15/1;

- the highest status attained by Abraham after prophethood and the friendship (khullah) of God, 15/1;

- cannot be vested in the oppressor, until the day of Judgement, 15/1;

- the status of the Prophets and the inheritance of the legatees (awṣiyā'), - the Khilāfat Allāh (vicegerency of God) and the Khilāfat al-rasūl (vicegerency of the Prophet), 15/1;

- fully described, 15/1;

- being coveted by others, 16/1;

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- should be sought in the house where the weapons of the Prophet are found, 38/1, 62/1;

- like prophethood must be announced at the set time by the will of God, 41/6;

- of every Imām announced by God alone, 60/1;

- the covenant of God and His Prophet for a person, until it reaches its right owner, 60/2;

- the covenant of God for specified persons and the Imām has no right to conceal that, 60/3;

the signs of -, 62/1;

- vested in the eldest son on the condition that he should be free of any defects, 62/6;

- will not be vested in two brothers after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, 63/1, 3, 4;

- will be vested among the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, 64/2;

the tokens of -: the Book, the weapons and the waṣiyyah of the Prophet, 66/1, 72/14;

- can be vested in a child as prophethood was vested in Jesus when he was a child, 73/10;

the signs of - as explained by ʿAlī, 81/3;

- in the family of al-Ḥusayn contested by the descendants of al-Ḥasan, 81/7;

- its false claimant will have a black face on the day of Judgement, 85/1, 2, 4; -

- of the rightful Imām crucial for the acceptance of religious endeavours, 86/2;

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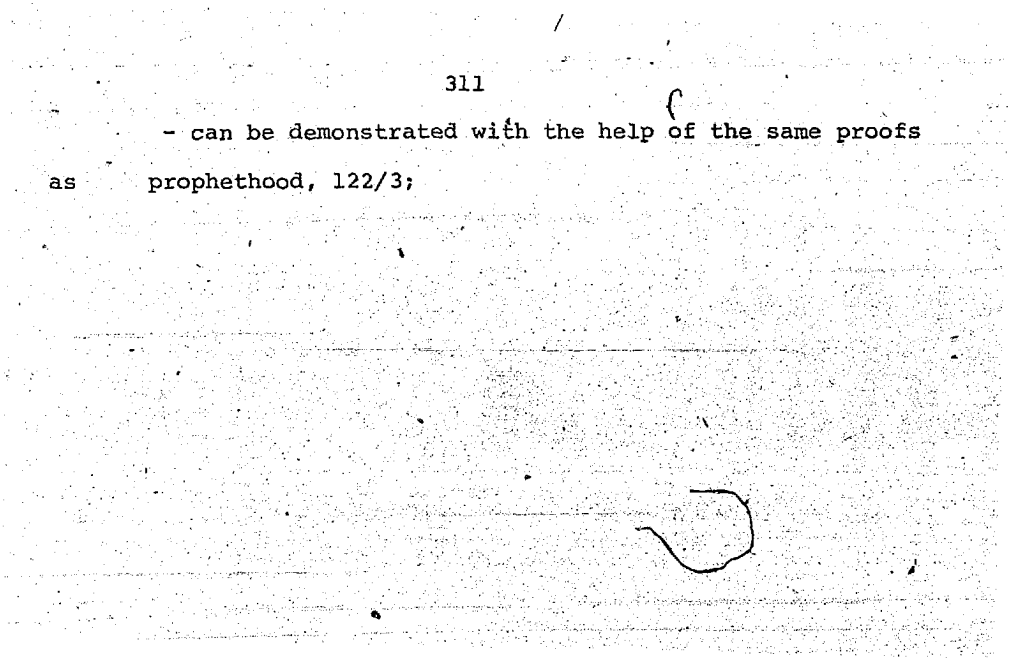
- can be demonstrated with the help of the same proofs as prophethood, 122/3;



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Notes on Appendix II

[1]for the explanation of all these material manifestations of the Imām's knowledge see Chap. I, fn. 93.

[2]See also the Glossary.

[3]Lane, Lexicon, I/8, 3050.

[4]See Chap. I, fn. 85 and Chap. II, fn. 11 and 73 for the full explanation of the term Ḥujjah.

[5]Lane, Lexicon, I/3, p. 969.

[6]al-Ism al-Aᶜẓam was supposed to empower its possessor with extraordinary strength in conceiving hidden matters.

[7]It is the command and injunction (Lane, Lexicon, I/8, 3055) in the written form, from God for the Imām who was required to follow the instruction therein (See Chap. I, fn. 75).

[8]See the Glossary for the explanation of all these terms and phrases.

[9]See Appendix IV on al-Khums.

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APPENDIX III

The doctrine of rajᶜah

One of the salient features of the Shīᶜite sects is the belief in rajᶜah. Rajᶜah means "the returning to the present state of existence after death,"[1] before the day of resurrection. Nearly every sect of the Shīᶜites maintained the belief that the Imāms had not died but would reappear on earth, to establish the rule of justice and equity.[2]

The belief in rajᶜah seems to have gained wide currency among Shīᶜite circles at a quite early period. In the early sources some persons are specifically mentioned as having maintained belief in this doctrine. Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, for instance, mentions Jābir b. Yazīd al-Juᶜfī (d. 128/745-46) as the one who believed in the rajᶜah of the dead before the Day of Judgement, in respect of the return of Muhammad b. ᶜAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan (d. 145/762-63), who was believed to be the Mahdī by a group of Shīᶜites.[3] He also mentions Bashshār b. Burd (d. 167/783-84), the poet, who maintained the belief in rajᶜah.[4] From the sources on the Islamic sects it can be discerned that as a rule the belief in rajᶜah was held in connection with the Shīᶜī Imāms beginning from ᶜAlī. It is sometimes found in connection with the Prophet himself, more particularly in the incident when ᶜUmar rebuked those who believed

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that the Prophet was dead, and he emphatically expressed his belief that he would return after forty days "just as Moses had done."[5] Next to ᶜAlī the belief was held in connection with his son Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah, whose followers, the Kaysānites, believed that Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah had not died but would reappear on earth.[6] In the later development of the Shīᶜite sects the belief is found in respect to nearly every Shīᶜite Imām. The Imāms were sometimes asserted to be in concealment and not dead, as in the case of the Wāqifiyyah in distinction from the Qaṭᶜiyyah who believed the Imām was dead and had a successor to continue the Imāmate.[7]

Although all the Shīᶜite sects held a belief in rajᶜah, they differed in their exposition of the doctrine. Al-Mufīd, commenting on this belief, says, "The Imāmites agree on the necessity of the rajᶜah on earth of a great number of the dead before the day of resurrection. But there is difference of opinion among them concerning the meaning of rajᶜah."[8] Al-Ashᶜarī touches on one of the basic differences among the 'Rawāfid', concerning the doctrine of rajᶜah. He says that the Shīᶜites are divided into two groups in their opinion about the rajᶜah of the dead on earth before the Day of Judgement. The first faction asserts that the dead will return to earth before the Day of Judgement and this is maintained by the majority of the Shīᶜites. In support of this belief, says al-Ashᶜarī, this group maintains that there will occur among the Muslims the like of what has occurred

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among the Children of Isrā'īl. Just as God brought to life a group of Banū Isrā'īl so will He bring to life the dead among Muslims and return them to the world before the day of resurrection. The second faction among the Shī^{c}ites, whom al-Ash^{c}arī mentions as Ahl al-Ghuluww (those who exceed the bounds of belief or who are extremist in Shī^{c}ite belief), reject the doctrine both of the resurrection and the hereafter. They maintain the belief in the transmigration of the soul in different forms. Their belief takes the following form: those who were righteous will be rewarded after death in such a way that their souls will be transferred to bodies which will not be afflicted by harm or pain; and those who were sinful will be punished after death in such a way that their soul will be transferred to a body which will be afflicted by harm and pain. This is the way, they assert, things will be, and the world will continue in this manner forever.[9]

The Imāmites belong to the first group mentioned by al-Ash^{c}arī. Raj^{c}ah in the Imāmite creed means the return of a group of believers to this world before the final resurrection occurs, during the days of al-Qā'im's rule, or before or after that period. The raj^{c}ah will take place in order to show the believers the rule of the righteous Imām and to exact revenge from the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt.[10] The purpose of raj^{c}ah would also require that a group of non-believers and the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt be also returned to earth so that revenge may be exacted from them.

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In regard to the rajᶜah of the Imāms themselves, there is a difference of opinion between the Imāmite sect and the other Shīᶜī groups: the latter hold the belief that those of their Imāms who disappeared will return eventually to establish their rule; the former hold the belief that rajᶜah actually means the return of the dead Imāms as in the case of ᶜAlī and al-Husayn. In respect to the twelfth Imām, who is the Hidden Imām of the Imāmites, it is his appearance or emergence (ẓuhūr) which is awaited rather than his 'return' (rajᶜah) as in the case of the other Imāms or even the Prophet.

The difference of opinion among the Imāmite writers on the meaning of rajᶜah to which al-Mufīd alludes[11] is centred on two points: first, whether the rajᶜah will take place simultaneously with the ẓuhūr of al-Qā'im, or before or after it; second, the duration of the period of the rule of al-Qā'im and the question of the rajᶜah of the other Imāms.

It is reported on the authority of the sixth Imām, al-Ṣādiq, that the first person for whom the earth will open up and who will return will be al-Ḥusayn b. ᶜAlī. This is not to be the general return of the dead, which will take place on the Day of Judgement; rather, this will be a partial return of only the genuine believers and total non-believers.[12] Another report quotes the fifth Imām, al-Bāqir, who told a group of Kufans that al-Husayn will be the first person to return and he will rule until such a time that his eyebrows will fall on his eyes (i.e. have grown so long as to touch

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his eyes).[13] The report adds that al-Husayn will be responsible for judging the people's deeds before and after the final resurrection when people will enter heaven or hell according to the judgement passed by al-Husayn.[14]

The sixth Imām, in explaining the verse of the Qur'ān which says, "Then, returned We unto you the turn (to prevail) against them and aided you ..."(XVII:6) says that by 'returned' is meant the return of al-Husayn who will be accompanied by his seventy companions who were killed with him on the battle-field of Karbalā'. These companions will announce the return of al-Husayn to the people. At that time, the Imām says, the believers should not doubt him, since he is neither Antichrist nor the Devil. The Qā'im will be among the people. When the people will have gained certainty about his being al-Husayn, the Qā'im will die and it will be al-Husayn who will perform his funeral rites and will bury him.[15]

Al-Mufīd in one place explains his own position regarding the meaning of raj^{c}ah. In this exposition he does not include the traditions concerning the return of the rule of the other Imāms but affirms the rule of al-Qā'im, upon whose emergence the raj^{c}ah will take place. This raj^{c}ah, al-Mufīd says, will be of only a group of the dead who will return to life in their own forms which they had possessed before their death. Among the group whose raj^{c}ah will have occurred, there will be some whom God will raise in esteem and there will be others whom He will lower. Those who were

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in the right will be given ascendancy over those who were untruthful;and those who were oppressed will be given the upper hand over the oppressors. "This /will occur/ upon the rising (qiyām) of Mahdī from among the progeny of Muhammad..."[16] Al-Mufīd then goes on to divide those who will have returned into two groups on the basis of their faith and actions. There will be that group who will have returned to earth because of their high status in the faith and numerous good deeds performed in their first life, and who died after a life spent in trying to avoid the commission of the grave sins. Thus God will show this group the rule of truth and will honour it with this, granting it all it wished to possess. The other group will be of those persons who were thoroughly corrupted and who had gone to the extreme in opposing those who were in the right and killed the friends (awliyā') of God. Thus God will aid those who were transgressed against by this group before death, and will assist them to vent their anger on them and take revenge on them. Then both these groups will die and will be brought to life again at the final Day of Judgement, when they will be entitled to the continuance of their reward or punishment.[17] Al-Mufīd concludes with the remark that the Imāmites with few exceptions were unanimous on this exposition of rajcah.[18]

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Notes on Appendix III

[1]Lane, Lexicon, Book I, Pt. III, p. 1040. He adds, "This was a tenet of some of the Arabs in the Time of Ignorance, and of a sect of Muslim innovators, and of a sect of rāfiḍah who say that ᶜAlī ..."

[2]See the Shīᶜite sects mentioned in all the works on Milal.

[3]al-Shahrastānī, Milal, I/255f; al-Ashᶜarī, Maqālāt, I/145 mentions him as the one who rose during al-Manṣūr's period in Madīnah. al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, p. 58f.

[4]al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, p. 54.

[5]Ibn Hishām, Sīra, II/155.

[6]al-Shahrastānī, Milal, I/243.

[7]See above chapter II for the explanation of the Wāqifiyyah and Qaṭᶜiyyah positions.

[8]al-Mufīd, Awā'il al-Maqālāt (Tabrīz, 1952), p. 13.

[9]al-Ashᶜarī, Maqālāt, I/114.

[10]al-Majlisī, Mahdī-yi Mawᶜūd, p. 1232. Majlisī quotes al-Mufīd who reports a reply given by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā on the rajᶜah of the Imāms.

[11]al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 13.

[12]al-Majlisī, op. cit., p. 1186f.

[13]Ibid., p. 1190.

[14]Ibid., p. 1189.

[15]Ibid., p. 1220.

[16]al-Mufīd, op. cit., p. 50.

[17]Ibid., p. 50.

[18]Ibid., p. 51.

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APPENDIX IV

al-Khums

Al-khums - the fifth -, in the Imāmite legal system, is a form of taxation made obligatory on the mukallafūn besides al-zakāt (the alms). Al-khums is calculated on the seven following items after deducting one year's provision: (1) the booty (al-ghanīmah), (2) the objects which are obtained by diving under the sea (al-ghawṣ), (3) the treasure (al-kanz), (4) the mine (al-maᶜdin), (5) gainful earnings (arbāḥ al-makāsib), (6) the lawful (al-ḥalāl) which has become mixed with the unlawful (al-ḥaram), and (7) the land which is transferred from a Muslim to a dhimmī by the latter's purchase of it.[1] The khums calculated on these items is payable to the Imām when he is present, and during the ghaybah to the righteous (al-ᶜadil) mujtahid, who is considered to be indirectly the representative of the Hidden Imām.[2]

Discussion on al-khums forms an integral part of all the Imāmite works on fiqh. It also forms one of the basic differences from the other schools of fiqh in Islam. As early as 4th/10th century, al-Kulaynī, in his exposition of that which belongs to the Imām, collected all the main traditions on the subject of al-khums which formed the basis for later elaboration of the institution of this form of taxation in

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the Imāmite religion. The Imāmite sources have numerous references to the fact that al-khums was given to the Imāms by their followers at different times.[3] The revenue from al-khums seems to have been a significant source of income for the Imāms who were not, according to the law, entitled to receive the ṣadaqāt.[4] It also demonstrated their strength and that of their followers. In some cases, at least, this income of the Imāms became a source of envy on the part of the caliphs, who were informed of the "flow of amwāl (wealth) from east and west" for the Imāms. Thus, for example, Hārūn al-Rashīd, the ᶜAbbāsid, was informed about the khums which Mūsā b. Jaᶜfar, the seventh Imāmite Imām, received in Madīnah, and Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, asserts this to be one of the factors which led to the imprisonment of this Imām by the Caliph.[5]

Al-khums in the early days of Islam and in the teachings of other schools of fiqh.

The origins of al-khums go back to the pre-Islamic Arab custom wherein the chief was entitled to one fifth of the ghanīmah, in addition to the ṣafw al-māl -- the best portion of the ghanīmah that especially attracted him. The remaining of the booty was to be divided among the raiders who had accompanied the chief.[6] The latter also reserved the right to dispose of the ghanīmah the way he liked.[7]

Under Islam ghanīmah and its distribution became the concern of the state since the booty was vast, and the simple

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pre-Islamic Arab custom of division of the booty was not efficient in the more complicated situations created by the Muslim conquests. Muslim scholars maintain that the injunction concerning the division of the ghanīmah and al-khums was instituted shortly after the battle of Badr (623-24) when the following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed:

> And know ye that whatever of a thing ye acquire a fifth of it is for God and for the Apostle and for the (Apostle's) near relatives and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if ye believe in God and that which We sent down ..."[8] (VIII:41)

According to this verse the Prophet received one fifth of the ghanīmah granted him in God's name. Ghanīmah in the terminology of Muslim scholars consisted of the weapons, horses and all other movable possessions taken from unbelievers in battle. Four fifths of the ghanīmah were to be divided among the troops who had accompanied the Prophet and one fifth went to the Prophet for the five purposes mentioned in the verse for the Prophet's share.

After the Prophet's death the controversy in regard to the allocation of al-khums of the ghanīmah arose among the Muslims. There were three different views concerning the allocation of al-khums: (1) According to the Mālikite teaching, al-khums after the Prophet's death was the right of the Imām, in the general sense of that term, and the Imām was free to exercise his discretion in its disposal to further

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the general interest of the ummah.[9] (2) The Shāfiᶜite teaching was to divide al-khums into four portions: one for the kindred of the Prophet and the other three for the general good of the Muslims.[10] (3) According to the Ḥanafite teaching al-khums was to be divided only among three of the five categories mentioned in Sūrah VIII;41, that is, the orphan, the needy and the wayfarer.[11] Abū Ḥanifah maintained that the portions that belonged to the Prophet and his family became null and void after the former's death[12] and the Prophet's share in particular, was to be spent on the troops and weapons, since this was the practice of the first two caliphs.[13]

Most of the later jurists, who have interpreted the verse VIII:41 literally, hold that al-khums which belongs to God must be divided as expressly mentioned therein among the five categories. The Prophet's share, they said, was to be used for the general good of the ummah or for the maintenance of the Muslim forces. The portion that belonged to the family, they added, was to be given to the Banū Hāshim, including the descendants of ᶜAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's grandfather, since the ṣadaqāt and al-zakāt were forbidden to them.[14]

So far, al-khums of the ghanīmah has been under consideration. But when the territorial conquests began, new items were included in the spoils of war which sometimes were surrendered by the unbelievers without fighting. These latter items were classified under al-fay' which belonged to

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the Prophet exclusively.[15] Fay' in the vocabulary of the fuqahā' means all those things taken from the unbelievers "without fighting"[16] to which the same rules for distribution as those mentioned in the case of al-khums were applied. According to the standard account, when the Banū Nadhīr surrendered after the siege, the Prophet resolved not to divide the fields and orchards left by them as booty of war among those who had taken part in the siege, but to give them to the Muhājirs exclusively.[17] This decision was, as the Qur'ān says, the result of God's favour for His Apostle, so that it was fay' -- 'that which returned' -- to him.[18] After the conquest of Khaybar and Fadak, the following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed:

> Whatever God hath bestowed on His Apostle from the people of towns, - belongeth unto God, and for the Apostle and for his kindred, the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarers, so that it may not circulate among the rich ones of you; and whatever giveth you the Apostle, ye accept it, and from whatever preventeth he, ye be away (from it); .." (LIX:7)

Hence fay' was also to be administered by the Prophet as al-khums of the ghanīmah. Here again the Muslim jurists differed as to whom belonged al-fay' after the Prophet's death, and the method of its distribution.

According to the Shāfi^{c}ite teaching al-fay' was divided into twenty-five portions in the Prophet's life-time, out of which four fifths that is, twenty portions, belonged to the Prophet in addition to the one fifth of the remaining five portions. The remaining four portions were to be divided among his family, the orphans, the needy and the travellers. After

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the Prophet's death, his portion and four percent of the remaining (khums al-khums) was to be spent either for the troops or for the general good of the ummah, of which the most important course of action was the maintenance of the troops.[19] The Hanafites, on the other hand, taught that the fay' and al-khums of the ghanīmah were to be divided into three portions after the death of the Prophet whereby his share and that of his family were set aside and included in the three portions assigned to the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers.[20] The Mālikite teaching was that both the fifth of the ghanīmah and four fifths of the fay', in addition to the four percent of the remaining portion of al-fay', were to be placed at the Imām's disposal so that he might administer them to further the cause of Islam.[21]

Another item relevant to the discussion of al-khums, besides al-ghanīmah and al-fay', is al-anfāl.[22] Al-anfāl in the usage of the fuqahā' refers to al-ghanā'im, with a slight distinction from the latter term. While al-ghanā'im are distributed among all the warriors, al-anfāl are given to those warriors who have distinguished themselves. In this sense then al-anfāl are the bonus shares which the Imām gives to some warriors in addition to their share in the ghanīmah.[23] Al-ghanīmah is bestowed on all the participants in a battle, while al-anfāl are at the disposal of the Prophet and after his death his successor who can bestow it on any one, the way he thinks best.[24]

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In the Qur'ān, al-anfāl are mentioned in the same sūrah in which the verse about the ghanīmah appears. Some exegetes of the Qur'ān are of the opinion that the verse about the ghanīmah (VIII:41) which was revealed shortly after the battle of Badr, was revealed immediately following the verse about the anfāl, in order to decide a major problem which arose among the companions of the Prophet:

> They ask thee about anfāl. Say, "The anfāl are for God and the Apostle; so ye fear God and set aright matters between yourselves and obey God and His Apostle if ye be believers." (VIII:1)

On the other hand, some exegetes hold that the verse on ghanīmah abrogated the earlier verse on al-anfāl.[25] Still others contend that al-anfāl were similar to al-khums,[26] that is, they belonged to the leader and therefore had to be provided for out of al-khums. According to al-Bayḍāwī's commentary, it would appear that al-anfāl were something promised even before the battle took place, and al-Shāfiᶜī did not think it binding on the leader to bestow what he had promised before as a fixed share of the expected booty.[27] However, al-anfāl seem to have been incorporated in al-ghanā'im in the later discussion of the booty, since there is no separate discussion about the injunctions concerning al-anfāl in the books on fiqh.

The Imāmite position in regard to al-khums

In his Kitāb al-Hujjah in al-Kāfī, al-Kulaynī has

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summed up the earliest exposition of al-khums in accordance with the Imāmite teaching. The following is the introduction to his section dealing with the traditions on al-khums. The Imāmite fuqaha' at various times have differed in their opinion concerning the interpretation of al-Kulaynī's summary, but basically his explanation is accepted:

> Indeed God, the Praised, the Exalted, gave the whole world, in its entirety, to His vicegerent, just as He said /in the Qur'ān/ unto the angels: "Verily, I (intend to) appoint a vicegerent (khalīfah) /i.e., Adam/ in the earth /II:30/." Thus the entire world belonged to Adam and was passed on to his righteous children and successors after him. Hence, whatever their enemies seize from them by fighting or victory and then returns to them is named fay'. /Fay'/ is that which is made to return to them /either/ by victory or by fighting. /Injunction concerning /fay'/ /The is what God, the Exalted, has said /in the Qur'ān/: "And know ye that whatever of a thing ye acquire, a fifth of it is for God, and for the Apostle and for the (Apostle's) near relatives and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer /VIII:41/." Thus it belongs to God, the Prophet and the Prophet's kindred. This then is al-fay', /that is,/ 'that which was made to return' (al-rājiᶜ). And 'that which was made to return' is what had fallen in the hands of others. Therefore, it was taken from them by the use of force (lit. by sword).
>
> But as for that which came back to them without being troubled with horses and troops, these are al-anfāl, and they belong exclusively to the Prophet. No one has a share in them; shares are made in the thing for which a battle was fought. /This is the case/ in the ghanā'im /of which/ four portions are assigned to those who fight and one portion to the Prophet. That /portion/ which belongs to the Prophet, he divides into six portions of which three are for himself[28] and the other three are divided among the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers. But in the case of al-anfāl, this is not the way prescribed /for its allocation/, since it belongs to the Prophet exclusively. Fadak[29] belonged to the Prophet

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> alone, since he and the Amīr al-Mu'minin /ᶜAlī/ had captured it and there was nobody else with them. Consequently, the name al-fay' ceases to be applied to it and it necessarily comes under al-anfāl. Similarly, jungles, mines, oceans and deserts belong to the Imām, in particular. Thus, if a group of people cultivate /a piece of land/ with the permission of the Imām, then four fifths belong to them and one fifth goes to the Imām. That one /portion/ assigned to the Imām follows the same procedure /in its distribution/ as al-khums.[30] But /if they/ cultivate it without the permission of the Imām, then the Imām takes it all and no one has a share in it. Likewise, those who build something or cause water to flow in a canal or cultivate dead land without the permission of the landowner (ṣāḥib al-arḍ),[31] then it does not belong to them. /The Imām/, if he wishes, may take it all away from them or may leave it in their hand.[32]

Al-ghanīmah, the Imāmite scholars argue, is used in a much wider sense than the booty of dār al-ḥarb (Abode of war).[33] Hence, it includes all sorts of gains and profits made in trade and industry. They support their contention concerning the usage of the term ghanīmah in the Qur'ān. They quote verse VIII:41 which reads: "Know ye that, whatever of a thing ye acquire (annamā ghanimtum min shayin)", that is, not limited to the spoils of war. This is one of the basic differences between the Imāmite and other schools of fiqh.[34] The other major difference is concerning the allocation of al-khums payable from al-ghanīmah after the death of the Prophet. It was seen above that majority of the Muslim scholars considered it permissible to utilize the Prophet's share, and in some cases his family's share too, for the general good of the ummah. As for the family's share in al-khums, the Shāfiᶜites taught that it had to be given to

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the family since they were not entitled to receive ṣadaqāt.[35]

According to the Imāmite jurists the khums is divided into six portions: a portion each for God, the Prophet, the family, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers. The first three portions belong to the Prophet and after his death to the rightful Imām, who succeeds him. The other three portions are to be given to the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers from among the descendants of the Prophet, that is, the Banū Hāshim.[36] Al-Kulaynī reports a tradition on the authority of Sulaym b. Qays al-Hilālī, who heard ᶜAlī saying that 'the kindred' of the Prophet (dhawi'l-qurbā) mentioned in the Qur'ān referred to the Banū Hāshim and "'the orphans and the needy' are among us exclusively, since He did not assign us a share in the ṣadaqah."[37] This division of al-khums in six portions, the Imāmites contend, is in conformity with the literal application of the injunction in the Qur'ān. The portion assigned to God in the Imāmite fiqh was in the Mālikite teaching to be used for the maintenance of the Kaᶜbah.[38] On the other hand, the Imāmites assigned that portion to the Prophet, in addition to his share and that of his kindred. All these three shares had to be administered by the Imām from among the progeny of the Prophet. Even the other three portions, which according to the Hanafite teaching, were the only portions into which al-khums should be divided after the Prophet's death and be utilized for the general good of the ummah, were in the Imāmite system, assigned

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to the Banū Hāshim only and consequently, were to be administered by the Imām himself.[39]

During the ghaybah of the twelfth Imām, the khums is handed over to the wakīl or nā'ib of the Imām. This nā'ib is the most learned (al-ᶜalam) and the righteous (al-ᶜādil) mujtahid.[40] The mujtahid divides the khums into two portions: sahm al-Imām and sahm al-sādāt. The first portion, which includes the three portions of God, the Prophet and the Imām, is used for the propagation of the faith and other similar activities. The other portion, which includes the other three categories entitled to receive the khums, is used for the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers among the Banū Hāshim only.[41] This practice seems to be a relic of the similar system in the early days of the Imāmite history during the Short Occultation. The four nā'ibs of the Imām were collecting the khums in the absence of the Imām and had developed an institution of this form which seems to have been fully organized from the late Ṣafavid period onward. Some of the Imāmite jurists maintained that sahm al-Imām of al-khums calculated on the gainful business or trade was not payable during the ghaybah of the Imām. On the other hand, there seems to have been an opinion among other Imāmite jurists that during the ghaybah the entire khums was lawful to the Shīᶜites and thus there was no need to pay it. Similarly, the Imāmites have disagreed on the allocation of the sahm al-sādāt to the Banū Hāshim only. There are some who maintained that this portion

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could be used even for the non-Sādāt Shī'ite orphans, needy and wayfarers.[42] The modern day mujtahids have, understandably, adhered to the division of al-khums into the two above-mentioned portions, and the revenue from al-khums has remained the source of their power and prestige as the indirect representatives of the Hidden Imām.

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Notes on Appendix IV

[1]dhimmī: a free non-Muslim who is protected by a treaty of surrender (See article dhimma in the S.E.I., p. 75-6). For detailed explanation of these seven items on which al-khums is to be calculated see al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Hakīm, Muḥsin b. Mahdī, Mustamsak al-ᶜUrwat al-Wuthqā (Najaf, 1369), V/556f.

[2]Āl Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', Muhammad al-Husayn, Aṣl al-Shīᶜah wa usūlahā (Cairo, 1958), p. 158.

[3]See the sources cited in Chapter III, Part I, especially the section dealing with the wukala' of the last Imām.

[4]ṣadaqāt is the plural of ṣadaqah, meaning 'charitable gift' which is used for benevolent purposes. It is frequently used as the synonym of zakāt.

[5]al-Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Faraj, Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, trans. into Persian by S. Hāshim Rasūlī Mahallātī (Tehrān, n.d.), p. 467.

[6]al-Baydāwī, Anwār al-Tanzīl, Vol. II/323 in his commentary on the LIX:7.

[7]See article ghanīma in the S.E.I., p. 110 and also Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Medina (Oxford, 1972), p. 255.

[8]See the exegesis of al-Baydāwī, op. cit., Vol. I, pt. 2/368; al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr (Cairo, n.d.), XIII/365; Ṭūsī, al-Tibyān (Najaf, 1957), V/143.

[9]al-Baydāwī, op. cit., II/367; Ṭūsī, op. cit., V/144.

[10]al-Baydāwī, op. cit., II/367; Ṭūsī, op. cit., V/144.

[11]al-Baydāwī, op. cit., II/367; Ṭūsi, op. cit., V/144; al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/559.

[12]al-Baydāwī, op. cit., II/367.

[13]Ṭūsī, op. cit., V/144.

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[14]See for the detailed explanation of the differences of opinion regarding the division of al-khums, particularly, the Prophet and his family's share in al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/547-60.

[15]Ṭūsī, op. cit., IX/563.

[16]Ibid., IX/564; al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/546.

[17]al-Bayḍāwī, op. cit., II/324.

[18]al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/547.

[19]Ṭūsī, Kitāb al-Khilāf fī al-Fiqh (Tehrān, 1383), Vol. II/110f.; see also al-Bayḍāwī, op. cit., who alludes to this opinion.

[20]Ṭūsī, op. cit., II/110.

[21]Ibid., II/123.

[22]anfāl is the plural of nafal, which means 'spoils of war' or 'gift'. The Muslim jurists have differed in its interpretation in the context of the verse in the Qur'ān. Some said that al-ghanīmah was termed al-anfāl because for no other people before the Muslims was al-ghanīmah made lawful. Thus it could be regarded as a 'gift' for them, i.e. nafal. On the other hand, some held that it was a special favour to the Prophet, for whom it was made 'gift' exclusively (Lisān al-ᶜArab, XI/671). It also means 'bonus' (al-ziyādah) which was given to the warriors who distinguished themselves from the share of the leader, that is, al-khums (Lisān al-ᶜArab, XI/671; Majmaᶜ al-Baḥrayn, V/485). Al-Ṭabarī maintains this to be the only sense in which the term anfāl has been used in the Qur'ān in VIII:1 (Tafsīr, XIII/365).

[23]al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/365; Ṭūsī, al-Tibyān, V/86.

[24]al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/367.

[25]Ibid., 378, 380. Al-Ṭabarī himself rejects the view of its being an abrogation of VIII:1, p. 382.

[26]Ṭūsī, op. cit., V/86.

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[27]al-Baydāwī, op. cit., Vol. I, pt. 2/357.

[28]These three include God's share, his own and that of his family. This is the Imāmite exposition.

[29]The Shīᶜites maintained that Fadak was given to Fāṭimah by the Prophet who had received it as al-anfāl, thus he was free to give it to anybody he wished at his discretion. After the Prophet's death Fadak became the object of disagreement between Fāṭimah and Abū Bakr. Fāṭimah maintained that Fadak should come to her as her father's heiress. Abū Bakr argued that he had heard the Prophet say that what he left would be ṣadaqah, that is to say, charitable gift to be used for benevolent purposes, like al-zakāt (See al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, II/476 and Majlisī's commentary on the third ḥadīth in this section; also al-Ṭabarsī, al-Iḥtijāj (Beirut, 1966), I/131f. reports the argument of Fāṭimah with Abū Bakr on the question of Fadak).

[30]that is, to be divided into six portions: three for the Imām and the other three for the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer.

[31]In this context, this refers to the Imām to whom, according to the Imāmites, belongs the earth.

[32]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., II/626-28.

[33]For further explanation of this phrase and its opposite dār al-Islām see articles under these titles in the S.E.I., p. 68-9. See also Majlisī's commentary on the above citation from al-Kāfī, p. II/629; al-Shahīd al-Thānī, Zayn al-Dīn al-ᶜAmilī, al-Rawḍat al-Bahiyyah fī sharḥ al-Lumᶜah al-Damishqiyyah (Najaf, 1967), V/65.

[34]Ṭūsī, al-Khilāf, II/110.

[35]Ibid., p. 123.

[36]Ibid., p. 122; al-Kulaynī, op. cit., II/631-34; al-Shahīd al-Thānī, op. cit., II/78.

[37]al-Kulaynī, op. cit., II/630; al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/559 mentions a similar tradition on the authority of ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, the fourth Imām.

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[38]al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., XIII/550.

[39]Ṭūsī, al-Khilāf, II/123-6.

[40]al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Ḥakīm, Mustamsak, V/647.

[41]al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Ḥakīm, Tawḍīḥ al-Maṣā'il (Tehran, n.d.), p. 296.

[42]al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Ḥakīm, Mustamsak, V/647-651.

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GLOSSARY

The following is a glossary of the technical terms which occur most frequently in the thesis. The meanings of the terms are confined to the context in which they appear in the thesis.

al-ᶜabath: 'futile'. In theological works it occurs in the discussion on the purpose of creation. God is wise and just, and therefore, no futile action can be attributed to Him. Also in kalām theories of moral acts where al-ᶜabath is an act that neither produces a position beneficial nor prevents harm, was considered by some as bad.

abwāb: pl. of bāb (q.v.) 'gate', mediator between the Imām and his followers. Al-Kulaynī also uses the plural form for all the Imāms meaning the 'gates' of God through which he is approached.

ahl al-bayt: 'the People of the House'. In the Shīᶜī writings (and in some Sunnī references) it includes the Prophet, ᶜAlī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and the other Imāms from among the descendants of al-Ḥusayn (See articles Ahl al-Bayt and Ahl al-Kisā' in E.I. 2/I, p. 258, 264).

ahl al-ghuluww: the extremist among the Shīᶜites who believed in the divinity of ᶜAlī and other Imāms (See article Ghulāt in E.I. 2?II, p. 1093f.).

ahl al-kitāb: 'the People of the Book', occurs in the Qur'ān and denotes the Jews and Christians, who had received the earlier scriptures: al-Tawrāt (the Torah), al-Zabūr (the Psalms) and al-Injīl (the Gospel) (See article Ahl al-Kitāb in E.I. 2?I, p. 264).

amīr al-mu'minīn: 'the Commander of the Faithful'. In the Shīᶜite writings the title is reserved for ᶜAlī exclusively.

amwāl: pl. of māl, goods taken as the one fifth (al-khums) (See Appendix IV on al-Khums).

aṣālah: 'fundamentality' (See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 3).

aṣlaḥ: 'more' or 'most salutary'. al-aṣlaḥ forms a theological discussion in kalām and is associated with Muᶜtazilism. The doctrine states that God is just and therefore, does

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the best for His creatures. His planning is guided by that which is most salutary and to the best interest of His servants. Both the Baṣra and Baghdād Schools agreed that God preferred the aṣlaḥ for man's religious welfare, but disagreed on whether He does that for their worldly benefit, i.e. whether He simply does the ṣalāḥ (salutary) (q.v.), but not the aṣlaḥ. See also badā'.

al-ᶜaql: 'intellect, intelligence'. In kalām it is discussed as a source of knowledge through which man attains knowledge of the first principles and ethical axioms, independently of the authority of al-samᶜ (q.v.) (al-Ḥillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī, p. 40; see also discussion on taklīf in Chap. III, Pt. II).

bāb: pl. abwāb, 'gate', is used in a technical sense in the early Imāmite writings. It signifies the means of communication with the Hidden Imām. The deputies of the twelfth Imām were thus termed abwāb between the Shīᶜites and their Imām, being the authorised disciples of the Imām (See article Bāb in E.I. 2/I, p. 832).

badā': 'occurrence'; 'to become apparent'. In Shīᶜite theology it signifies the intervention of new circumstances which bring about a change in an early divine ruling (al-Mufīd, Awā'il al-Maqālāt, p. 53). In the Imāmite writings badā' serves to explain, on the grounds of expedience which God exercises in His planning, the Imāmate of Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d. 183/799). The doctrine of badā' is based on the discussion of al-aṣlaḥ (the most salutary) which states that God does the best for His creatures, and His planning is based on what is most salutary and in the best interest of His slaves (See article Badā' in E.I. 2?I, p. 850f.; al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. I/262-66. But it was rejected by Ashᶜarism because it was interpreted as implying a change of mind on the part of God due to what He earlier did not foresee and hence a denial of divine omniscience.

Baqiyyat Allāh: the title of the twelfth Imām derived from the verse in the Qur'ān (XI:86): "That which is left by God". (See Chapt. II, fn. 92).

al-dalīl al-ᶜaqlī: argument based on reason independent of revelation. Usually inference from effect to cause; however, when the philosophers use the term dalīl, they mean by it inference from effect to cause. See al-ᶜaql.

al-dalīl al-samᶜī: argument based on traditional sources such as the Qur'ān, sunnah, qiyās and ijmāᶜ. See al-samᶜ.

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faqīh: pl. fuqahā', 'jurist' or in the original sense of the term 'theologian', and sometimes both. See fiqh. The lowest degree of a faqīh, according to al-Ghazālī, is one who possesses only the knowledge that the hereafter is better than this world (Jabr, Essai, p. 224).

fiqh: originally meant 'comprehension' or 'intuitive intelligence' (Lexicon, I/6, p. 2429; Jabr, Essai, p. 224). In the technical sense of the term it is knowledge of the religious law in Islam. In the earlier period the term fiqh also included the speculative side of the religion in addition to jurisprudence, and was used in the sense of comprehending religious sciences through the independent exercise of one's own well-informed judgement. (This was never open to just anybody.) This process became necessary in the absence of a ruling based on the Qur'ān, or in cases which the existence of such a ruling was not known, or in cases involving the interpretation of Qur'ānic texts in the light of the traditions (See article Fiḳh in the E.I. 2/II, p. 886).

ghaybah: 'disappearance, occultation' of the twelfth Imām, with the understanding that there would be no Imām after him and that he would appear as the Mahdī.

ghaybat al-qasīrah: The Short Occultation, also known, in the later period, as ghaybat al-ṣughrā (the Lesser) which lasted for some sixty-eight years (874-941).

ghaybat al-tāmmah: The Complete Occultation, also known as ghaybat al-kubrā (the Greater) in the later period. This occultation began from 941 and will continue until the reappearance of the twelfth Imām.

ḥadd: pl. ḥudūd, 'legal punishment' of certain sects which have been forbidden or for which punishments have been prescribed in the Qur'ān (Lexicon, I/2, 525; article Ḥadd in the E.I. 2/III, 20f.).

al-ḥads: 'intellectual intuition'. As used by Ibn Sīnā, it denotes a 'flash of comprehension' which enables the mind to perceive a truth hitherto unperceived. In fiqh it is used as a synonym of ijtihād (q.v.) (See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 120).

al-ḥaqq: 'suitable to the reality' or 'reality' (Lexicon, I-2, 607). In the context of this thesis its secondary meaning, 'the truth', which has al-bāṭil as its opposite, is more appropriate. (Jabr, Essai, 69; article ḥakk in the E.I. 2/III, 82).

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al-ḥiss: The term basically means 'the sense', i.e., the five senses taken collectively. As a theological and philosophical term, it means 'the principle of intellectual knowledge', that is that knowledge which is attained by intellectual process. For its use in the context of ijmāᶜ in the Imāmite fiqh see Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 114.

ḥujjah: The 'Competent Authority' in the matters pertaining to religion. Also 'Proof' in the sense that the Imām who is the Proof of God stands as a proof of His existence and the existence of His revelation on earth (al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. I/361). For the discussion of this title of the Shīᶜī Imāms see Chap. I, fn. 85; Chap. II, p. 77f.

ḥusn: 'goodness' used as the antithesis of 'evil' (qabḥ) in kalām; according to the Shīᶜites and Muᶜtazilites, ḥusn was objective in nature, more specifically an objective attribute or state of the moral act; that is, it belongs to the theory of moral acts. In other words, our reason unaided by revelation is capable of knowing it (See Chap. III, Pt. II, p.167f and also Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, p. 103).

ijtihād: "A lawyer's exerting the faculties /of the mind/ to the utmost for the purpose of forming an opinion in a case of law"/respecting a doubtful and different point/" (Lexicon, I/2, 475). Ijtihād is an independent estimation of the faqīh in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the four sources of the Islamic Law: the Qur'ān, sunnah, ijmāᶜ, and qiyās (Jabr, Essai, 62f.).

ikhtiyār: 'choice by election' concerning the question of Imāmate. This is in opposition to naṣṣ (clear designation) of the Imām by the Prophet as maintained by the Shīᶜites (al-Baghdādī, Uṣūl, 279; see article Ikhtiyār in E.I. 2/III, 1062).

al-ᶜilm al-darūrī: 'necessary' or 'immediate knowledge (See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 13)

al-ᶜilm al-naẓarī: knowledge which results from an inquiry; also known as al-muktasab (acquired) (See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 13)

al-Imām al-ghā'ib: 'The Hidden Imām': one of the earliest titles of the twelfth Imām.

al-Imām al-nāṭiq: 'The "speaking" /the Truth/ Imām': This title is used for the Imāms who form the source of demonstrative knowledge as compared with the Qur'ān which is al-ṣāmit (the silent).

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Imām al-ṣāmit: 'The Silent Imām'. This is the title used for the Imām when there are two of them at one time; one being the nāṭiq and the other ṣāmit as was the case with al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

Imām al-zamān: 'The Imām of the Age'. This is one of the important titles of the twelfth Imām with the implication that he is the only living Imām of the Age.

irādah: 'will' /of God/ which He makes known to the mukallafūn (q.v.) in the form of necessary knowledge and rational and traditional guidance. (See Chap. III, Pt. II, p. 168.).

ism al-aᶜẓam: the most esteemed name of God which, in the Imāmite tradition, was supposed to have been given to the Prophet and then was passed on to the Imāms. The one possessed of this name was endowed with supernatural powers and knowledge of the hidden things.

ᶜiṣmah: 'infallibility'. It is "a faculty of avoiding or shunning, acts of disobedience /or of self-preservation therefrom,/ with /i.e. despite/ possession of power to commit them" (Lexicon, I/5, 2067). It also means infallibility in the "total knowledge of the meaning of the revelation and its prescription" (E.I. 2/IV, p. 184).

iᶜtiṣām: 'protection from disobedience' by the grace of God (Lexicon, I/5, 2066).

kabā'ir: pl. of kabīrah, 'grave sins', which the Imām could not commit at all. For example, shirk (polytheism) was a grave sin and the Imām at no time in his life could commit shirk.

kaffārah: 'expiation' or 'atonement' for neglected duties or sins of omission and commission. See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 53.

khums: 'one fifth'. A form of taxation made incumbent upon all the Imāmites besides the alms-giving (al-zakāt) (See Appendix IV on al-Khums).

lutf: 'grace'. In the context of this thesis when God imposes obligations on men He makes the fulfilment of these obligations possible by giving them a 'grace'. Madelung in his article on Imāma in E.I. 2/III, p. 1167, translates lutf as 'benevolence'. But in the context in which the term is used in kalām it is more appropriate to render it 'grace'. Moreover, 'benevolence' or 'acts of benevolence' is the translation of niᶜmah (See Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, p. 106).

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al-mahdī: 'The one guided by God to the truth' (al-ḥaqq). This is the proper name of the twelfth Shīᶜī Imām, who will come at the end of time.

mandūb: 'recommended act', the doing of which is more excellent than the leaving it undone, in the eye of the prescriber of the law, but which it is permissible to leave undone (Lexicon, I/8; 2750).

marjaᶜ (or marjiᶜ) al-taqlīd: a competent authority to which a muqallid refers in matters of religion. /See also mujtahid/.

maᶜṣūm: 'infallible' in the sense that despite of possessing power to commit acts of disobedience, a person is endowed with the grace of God which makes him avoid such acts /See ᶜiṣmah/.

mubāḥ: indifferent actions for which neither reward nor punishment is to be expected, but which are permissible (Lexicon, I/1, p. 274).

muḥaddath: a person who is inspired; as though he is told a thing and says it. This is what the Shīᶜī Imām is held to be, namely, he hears the voice of angel but does not see him. (Lexicon, I/2, 529; al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, Vol. II/37f.).

muhtadī: 'guided', in the sense of being the recipient of divine guidance in the matters of religion.

muḥtalim: derived from the VIII form of the root ḤLM, meaning one who experiences an emission of the seminal fluid while dreaming (Lexicon, I/2, 633).

mujtahid: the one who practises ijtihād (q.v.) that is, he is one who by his own exertions forms his own opinion in matters pertaining the law. In Imāmite fiqh a mujtahid is also a muftī, giver of fatwās, whose legal opinions were followed by the muqallidūn (imitators). The muqallidūn followed the rulings of a mujtahid without any necessary knowledge of its basis. Thus a learned mujtahid also becomes marjaᶜ al-taqlīd, a competent authority to which a person refers in matters of religion "firmly believing him to be right therein, without regard or consideration of the proof or evidence" (Lexicon, I/7, 2557).

mukallaf: 'the one on whom the task is imposed' in the form of taklīf (q.v.) by the Mukallif.

mukallif: 'the one who imposes a task'. In kalām it is God who imposes religious duties on the mukallaf (q.v.) in the form of taklīf, so as to expose the latter to the great reward.

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naṣṣ: 'clear designation' of a successor to the Prophet, as opposed to the principle of ikhtiyār (q.v.).

qabḥ (or qubḥ): 'evil'. An evil act is that which deserves blame (Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, p. 49) /See ḥusn/

al-Qā'im: 'The Upholder'; one of the important titles of the twelfth Imām (See Chap. II, p. 68f:).

al-Qā'im bi Amr Allāh: 'The Upholder of the Command of God'; one of the titles of the twelfth Imām showing his function at the time of his reappearance.

al-Qā'im bi'l-jihād: 'The Upholder of the Holy War' /against the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt/. The title of the twelfth Imām showing his function.

al-Qā'im bi'l-sayf: 'The One who will rise with the Sword' /to exact revenge from the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt/. The title of the twelfth Imam used interchangeably with al-Qā'im bi'l-jihad.

raj^{c}ah: 'The returning to the present state of existence' after death, before the day of resurrection. In the Shī^{c}ī belief it also means the reappearance of the Imām who had disappeared, to establish the rule of justice and equity (See Appendix III on Raj^{c}ah).

rāwī: pl. ruwāt, 'transmitters' of ḥadīth. In the Imamite writings refers to the mujtahid who is considered to be the sole custodian of the teachings of the Imāms. (See Chap. III, Pt. I, p. 148f.).

riyāsah: used as the synonym of 'imāmah' (leadership) (See Chap. III, Pt. II, fn. 61).

ruju^{c}: = raj^{c}ah (q.v.)

ṣaghā'ir: pl. of ṣaghīrah, 'minor sins' as opposed to kabā'ir, that is, grave sins.

ṣāḥib al-amr: 'The Master of the Command'. One of the titles of the twelfth Imām.

ṣāḥib al-zamān: 'The Master of the Age'. One of the titles of the twelfth Imām.

ṣalāḥ: 'benefit, propriety'. Also a synonym of maṣlaḥah (q.v.) (Lexicon, I/4, p. 1715). Also in relation of al-aṣlaḥ see al-aṣlaḥ.

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al-samᶜ: lit. 'the hearing'. It is that knowledge which becomes accessible through the traditional sources, such as the Book and the Sunnah, ijmāᶜ and qiyās (analogy), in contrast with what is known by al-ᶜaql (q.v.). The Book, the Sunnah, ijmāᶜ and qiyās constitute al-samᶜ, or revelations (Jabr, Essai, p. 127; Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, p. 129-130).

shahīd: 'witness', in the sense that he is the one who shall be called upon to bear witness on the day of Judgement to what was revealed to the Prophet and those who acknowledged him and those who charged him with falsehood (Chap. I, fn. 84).

taklīf: 'imposition of a task, obligation' (Chap. III, Pt. II, p.167f.), the fulfilment of which carries great reward in the future life.

taklīf al-ᶜaqlī: taklīf which is based on al-ᶜaql, that is, the unaided reason is capable of knowing it, independently of revelation.

taklīf al-samᶜī: that taklīf which is based on al-samᶜ, that is revelation.

taqiyyah: technically "dispensation from the requirements of religion under compulsion or threat of injury (article takiya in E.I. 1/IV, p. 628). E. G. Browne renders it "prudential concealment" (Lit. Hist. of Persia, Vol. IV/17). In the Imamite sense it means "protection of the true religion from enemies by hiding it, in circumstances where there is fear of being killed or captured or insulted (Ibn Bābūyah, A Shīᶜite Creed, p. 110, fn. 2). This dispensation is not accepted by Sunnites.

wāhid: 'rare' or 'unique', technical term used in the classification of ḥadīth.

wahy: 'revelation'. It is that knowledge which is transmitted through the archangel Gabriel and reserved for the prophets only. It differs from ilhām, which is inspiration. In revelation a prophet hears the voice and sees the angel. /See muḥaddath/. (al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, II/37f.).

wājib: 'obligatory' or 'binding' in the moral sense of the term; 'incumbent' or 'necessary' in the sense that certain act becomes logically necessary. (Lexicon, I/8, 2923; Hourani, Islamic Rationalism, p. 115).

wājibāt: those acts which are made obligatory, and for neglecting which one will be punished (Lexicon, I/8, 2923).

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wājib al-tāᶜah: 'to whom obedience is necessary'

walī al-amr: 'the ruler, the legal guardian' (Dozy, Supp., II/843), is a title of the twelfth Imām which means that he will exact revenge from the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt.

wasī: 'legatee'; in the context of the Shīᶜite writings, an Imām commissioned to execute the will of the Prophet (See Lexicon, I/8, 3055 for its basic meaning).

waṣiyyah: 'testament' or 'the command' (Lexicon, I/8, 3055) from God, in the written form for the Imāms who were required to follow the instruction therein (See Chap. I, fn. 75).

wikālah: used as the synonym of sifārah and niyābah in the Shīᶜite writings, meaning 'deputyship'.

wilāyah: 'love and devotion' (Jabr, Essai, p. 278) towards the Ahl al-Bayt (q.v.).

ziyārah: pl. ziyārāt, literally 'visit'; technically, 'salutations' offered at the shrines of the Imāms.

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